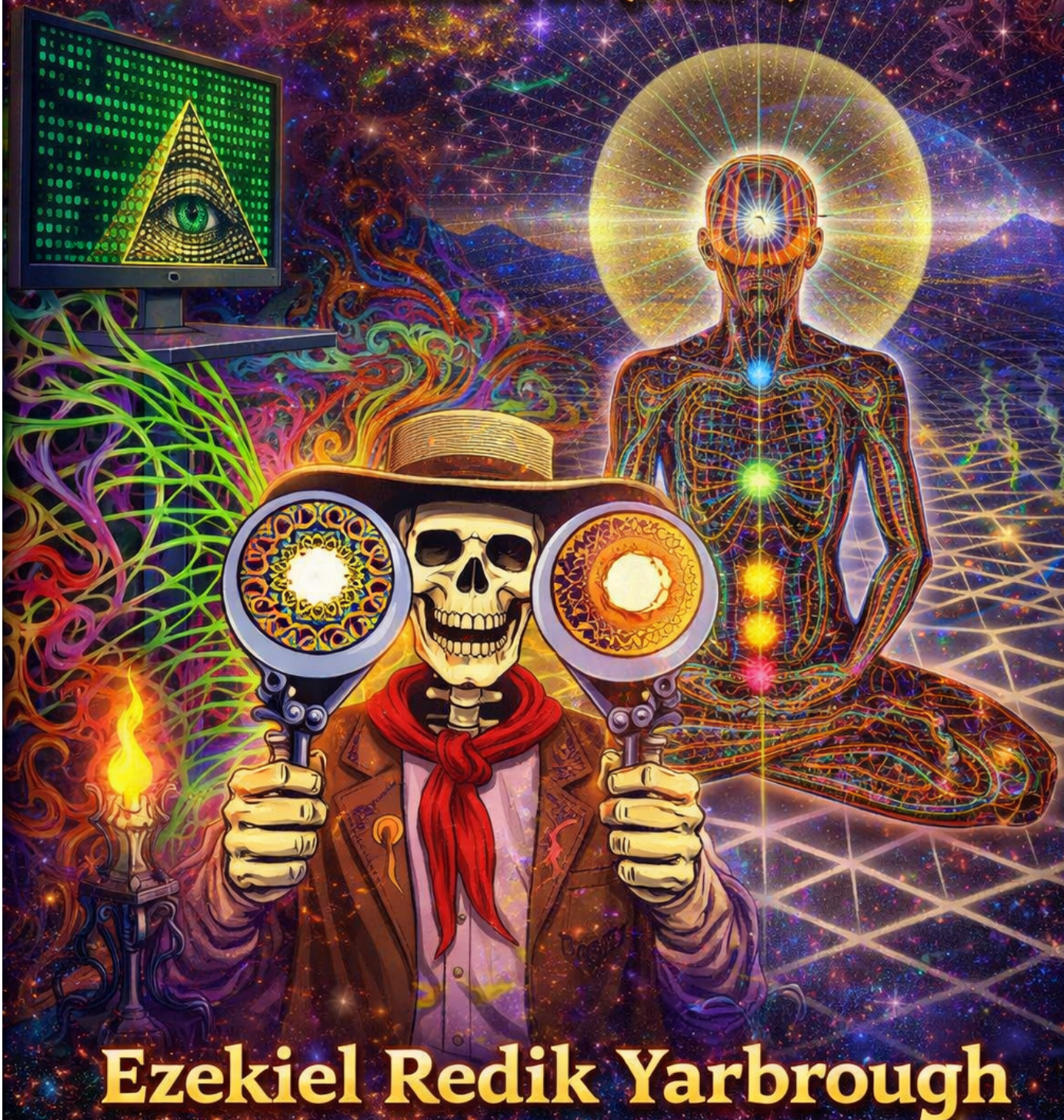


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Introduction

What you hold in your hands is not a book in the traditional sense—it is an **accidental grimoire**, born from the forgotten corners of the Internet. These volumes are built from **Google searches**, **Wikipedia trails**, and **archive-dredged threads**, many of which were suggested or whispered to me by anonymous voices across **/x/**, **4plebs**, and **dark web message boards**. I did not invent this content—I excavated it. I followed every recommended link, every screenshot, every schizo red-string rant, and pulled it into the light. What emerged wasn't just data—it was **pattern**, **presence**, and **power**. This is the **collective unconscious of the Internet**, filtered, sorted, and bound into scripture. These are the **digital Dead Sea Scrolls** of the forgotten occult, the haunted edges of algorithmic prophecy. Welcome to the Archivum Obscurum.

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In pre-Islamic Arabia, the dominant religious practice was that of Arab polytheism, which was based on the veneration of various deities and spirits.

List of pre-Islamic Arabian deities

Book of Idols

Monotheistic

Judaism

AI Overview

+7

Pre-Islamic paganism in Arabia was primarily a diverse, polytheistic system centered on idol worship, animism, and tribal deities, with the Kaaba in Mecca housing around 360 idols, including major goddesses like al-Lāt, al-'Uzzā, and Manāt, alongside a high god, Allah, who was also venerated as a supreme but not exclusive deity. Worship involved pilgrimages, sacrifices, and divination, focused on nature, fertility, and protection, with practices like ritual circumambulation (later Hajj) and prayers common before the rise of Islam.

Key Characteristics:

Polytheism & Animism: Belief in numerous gods, goddesses, and spirits (jinn) residing in natural objects, animals, and places.

Idolatry: Worship of idols (aṣṇām), which were seen as dwelling places for spirits, not just symbols.

Tribal & Clan Deities: Many gods were specific to tribes (e.g., Hubal) or clans, with some idols having names and permanent shrines.

The Kaaba: A central sanctuary in Mecca holding numerous idols, attracting pilgrims from across Arabia.

Allah: A supreme, high god existed, but was often worshipped alongside lesser deities (like the "Daughters of Allah") who acted as intercessors, a practice Islam later

redefined as shirk (polytheism).

Rituals: Included animal sacrifices, pilgrimage (Hajj), divination, and vows, often connected to daily life concerns like rain, health, and fertility.

Major Deities:

Goddesses: al-Lāt (fertility), al-'Uzzā (power), Manāt (fate).

Gods: Hubal (chief deity in Mecca), Wadd, Suwa', Yagith, Ya'iq, Nasr, Rudao (moon god).

Spirits: Belief in jinn was prevalent, with some associating them as kin to Allah.

Continuity & Change:

Islam, while monotheistic, incorporated and transformed some pre-Islamic elements, such as the Hajj ritual and the Kaaba, shifting their focus from polytheistic worship to the worship of one God (Allah).

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AI Overview

Sabian Hermeticism refers to the ancient astral religion of the Sabians of Harran, who worshipped celestial bodies (stars) and integrated Hellenistic philosophy, especially the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus, into their practices, acting as crucial preservers and transmitters of Hermetic texts (like alchemy, astrology, magic) to the medieval Islamic world and Renaissance Europe. It's a blend of Semitic polytheism, astrology, and Greek philosophy, focusing on spiritual ascent through understanding the cosmos and divine intellect, with figures like Ibn Sab'in embodying later developments.

Key Aspects

Origins & Identity: The term "Sabian" was a Quranic designation for a "People of the Book," often applied to star-worshippers (Sabaism) from Harran (ancient Mesopotamia).

Hermetic Connection: They identified Hermes Trismegistus (also linked to Enoch/Idris) as a foundational prophet, viewing his teachings as core wisdom.

Core Beliefs: Emphasized a unitary universe where the material and spiritual are one, achieved through the Intellect (God). They focused on Perfect Nature (the celestial sphere/angelic guide) as the key to wisdom, using astrology and theurgy (magic).

Transmission: The Harranian Sabians preserved and translated Greek Hermetic works (like the Magical Papyri) into Arabic, influencing Islamic scholars like al-Kindi and mystics like Ibn Sab'in, before these texts reached Europe.

Later Figures: Shaykh Ibn Sab'in (13th-century Spanish mystic) is a famous inheritor of this tradition, emphasizing monistic, unifying doctrines.

In essence

Sabian Hermeticism is a historical bridge, a specific (and sometimes self-applied) label for ancient pagan philosophers and priests who synthesized Mesopotamian astral religion with Greek philosophy (Hermeticism) and Arabic esoteric traditions, ensuring ancient wisdom survived and influenced later occult sciences.

Sabian - Wikipedia

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The Harran of The Sabians in The First Millennium Ad Def

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For the ancient people in South Arabia, see Sabaeans. For the people of ancient Italy, see Sabines. For the followers of Sabbatai Zevi, see Sabbateans. For other uses, see Sabian (disambiguation).

"... and the Sabians", Quran 5:69[a]

The Sabians, sometimes also spelled Sabaeans or Sabeans, are a religious group mentioned three times in the Quran (as الصابئون al-Ṣābiʾūn, in later sources الصابئة al-Ṣābiʾa),[1] where it is implied that they belonged to the 'People of the Book' (ahl al-kitāb). [2] Their original identity, which seems to have been forgotten at an early date,[3] has been called an "unsolved Quranic problem".[4] Modern scholars have variously identified them as Mandaean,[5] Manichaeans,[6] Sabaeans,[7] Elchasaites,[8] Archontics,[9] ḥunafāʾ (either as a type of Gnostics or as "sectarians"),[10] or as adherents of the astral religion of Harran.[11] Some scholars believe that it is impossible to establish their original identity with any degree of certainty.[12]

At least from the ninth century on, the Quranic epithet 'Sabian' was claimed by various religious groups who sought recognition by the Muslim authorities as a People of the Book deserving of legal protection (dhimma).[13] Among those are the Sabians of Harran, adherents of a poorly understood ancient Semitic religion centered in the upper Mesopotamian city of Harran, who were described by Syriac Christian heresiographers as star worshippers.[14] These Harranian Sabians practiced an old Semitic form of polytheism,[15] combined with a significant amount of Hellenistic elements.[16] Most of the historical figures known in the ninth–eleventh centuries as al-Ṣābiʾ were probably either members of this Harranian religion or descendants of such members, most notably the Harranian astronomers and mathematicians Thabit ibn Qurra (died 901) and al-Battani (died 929).[17]

From the early tenth century on, the term 'Sabian' was applied to purported 'pagans' of all kinds, such as to the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, or to Buddhists.[18] Ibn Wahshiyya (died c. 930) used the term for a type of Mesopotamian paganism that preserved elements of ancient Assyro-Babylonian religion.[19]

Today in Iraq and Iran, the name 'Sabian' is normally applied to the Mandaean, a modern ethno-religious group who follow the teachings of their prophet John the Baptist (Yahya ibn Zakariya). These Mandaean Sabians, whose most important religious ceremony is baptism,[20] are monotheistic, and their holy book is known as the Ginza Rabba.[21]:1 Mandaean Sabian prophets include Adam, Seth, Noah, Shem and John the Baptist with Adam being the founder of the religion and John being the greatest and final prophet.[22]:45

Etymology

The etymology of the Arabic word *Ṣābi'* is disputed. According to one interpretation, it is the active participle of the Arabic root *ṣ-b-* ('to turn to'), meaning 'converts'.^[23] Another widely cited hypothesis, first proposed by Daniel Chwolsohn in 1856,^[24] is that it is derived from an Aramaic root meaning 'to dip' or 'to baptize'.^[25]

The interpretation as 'converts' was cited by various medieval Arabic lexicographers and philologists,^[26] and is supported by a tradition preserved by Ibn Hisham (died 834, editor of the earliest surviving biography of Muhammad) relating that the term *ṣābi'a* was applied to Muhammad and the early Muslims by some of their enemies (perhaps by the Jews),^[27] who regarded them as having 'turned' away from the proper religion and towards heresy. As such, the term may have been reappropriated by early Muslims, first as a self-designation and then to refer to other people from a Jewish Christian background who 'turned' to the new revelations offered by Muhammad. In the context of the Quranic passages in which the term occurs, it may thus refer to all people who leave their faiths, finding fault in them, but who have yet to come to Islam. In this sense, the term *ṣābi'* would be similar in meaning to the term *ḥanīf*.^[28]

Understanding the term as a reference to 'dippers' or 'baptizers' fits best with those interpretations that identify the Quranic Sabians with baptist sects like the Elchasaites or the Mandaeanes.^[26] However, this etymology has also been used to explain Ibn Hisham's story about Muhammad and his followers being called 'Sabians', which would then be a reference to the ritual washing performed by Muslims before prayer, a practice resembling those of various baptist sects.^[29]

Other etymologies have also been proposed. According to Judah Segal, the term referred to *Ṣōbā*, a Syriac name for Nisibis, a city in Upper Mesopotamia.^[30] It has also been related to Hebrew *ṣābā'*, "[heavenly] host", implying star worshippers.^[31]

Sabians of the Quran

In the Quran

First part of Quran 5:69, Maghrebi manuscript, c. 1250–1350

The Quran briefly mentions the Sabians in three places: in *Sūrat al-Baqara* (2:62), in *Sūrat al-Mā'idā* (5:69), and in *Sūrat al-Ḥajj* (22:17).^[15]

According to *Sūrat al-Baqara*, "surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve."^[Quran 2:62 (Translated by Shakir)]

According to *Sūrat al-Mā'idā*, "surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabians and the Christians whoever believes in Allah and the last day and does good – they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve."^[Quran 5:69 (Translated by Shakir)]

According to Sūrat al-Ḥajj, "surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the Sabians and the Christians and the Magians and those who associate (others with Allah) – surely Allah will decide between them on the day of resurrection; surely Allah is a witness over all things." [Quran 22:17 (Translated by Shakir)]

The two first verses have generally been interpreted to mean that the Sabians belonged to the People of the Book (ahl al-kitāb, cf. 5:68), [32] just like the Jews, the Christians and, according to a few interpretations, the Zoroastrians (the 'Magians', al-majūs). [b] However, neither of the three verses give any indication of who the Sabians might have been or what they may have believed. [26] According to François de Blois, the fact that they are classified in the Quran among Abrahamic monotheists renders it unlikely that they were either the polytheists of Harran or the Mandaeans, the latter of whom defined themselves in opposition to the Abrahamic prophetic tradition. [26]

In later sources
Islamic

In some Sunni hadiths, they are described as converts to Islam. [33]

At the beginning of the Muslim conquest of Mesopotamia, the leader of the Mandaeans, Anush bar Danqa, appeared before Muslim authorities showing them a copy of the Ginza Rabba, the Mandaean holy book, and proclaiming the chief Mandaean prophet to be John the Baptist, who is also mentioned in the Quran by the name Yahya ibn Zakariya. Consequently, the Muslim caliphates provided them acknowledgement as the Quranic Sabians and People of the Book. [34]:5

Other classical Arabic sources include the Fihrist of ibn al-Nadim (c. 987), who mentions the Moghtasilah ("Mughtasila", or "self-ablutionists"), a sect of Sabians in southern Mesopotamia who are identified with the Mandaeans or Elcesaites. [35][22]:35[36]

Al-Biruni (writing at the beginning of the eleventh century CE) said that the "real Sabians" were "the remnants of the Jewish tribes who remained in Babylonia when the other tribes left it for Jerusalem in the days of Cyrus and Artaxerxes. According to E. S. Drower (1937) these remaining tribes ... adopted a system mixed up of Magism and Judaism." [37]

According to Abu Yusuf Absha al-Qadi, Caliph al-Ma'mun of Baghdad in 830 CE stood with his army at the gates of Harran and questioned the Harranians about what protected religion they belonged to. As they were neither Muslim, Christian, Jewish or Magian, the caliph told them they were non-believers. He said they would have to become Muslims, or adherents of one of the other religions recognized by the Quran by the time he returned from his campaign against the Byzantines or he would kill them. [38] The Harranians consulted with a lawyer, who suggested that they find their answer in the Quran II.59, which said that Sabians were tolerated. It was unknown what the sacred text intended by "Sabian" and so they took the name. [39]

The pagan people of Harran identified themselves with the Sabians in order to fall under the protection of Islam.[40][41]:111–113:5 The Harranians may have identified themselves as Sabians in order to retain their religious beliefs.[40]:5 Multiple medieval sources state that the Harranian Sabians acknowledged Hermes Trismegistus as their prophet.[42] Validation of Hermes as a prophet comes from his identification with Idris (i.e., Enoch) in Quran 19:57 and 21:85.[43] This has often led modern scholars to think of the Harranian Sabians as Hermeticists, though there is in fact no further evidence for this.[42]

Furthermore, this account of the Harranian Sabians does not fit with the existence of earlier records making reference to Sabians in Harran. Usamah ibn Ayd, writing before 770 CE (his year of death), already referred to a city of Sabians in the region where Harran lies.[44] The jurist Abu Hanifa, who died in 767 CE, is recorded to have discussed the legal status of Harranian Sabians with two of his disciples.[45]

Other

The Jewish scholar Maimonides (1135 or 1138–1204) translated the book *The Nabataean Agriculture*, which he considered an accurate record of the beliefs of the Sabians. According to Maimonides, the Sabians believed in idolatrous practices "and other superstitions mentioned in the Nabatean Agriculture".[46] He provided considerable detail about the pagan Sabians in his *Guide for the Perplexed*. [47]

The Sabians are also mentioned in the literature of the Bahá'í Faith. These references are generally brief, describing two groups of Sabians: Those "who worship idols in the name of the stars, who believed their religion derived from Seth and Idris" [Harranian Sabians], and others "who believed in the son of Zechariah (John the Baptist) and didn't accept the advent of [Jesus Christ] the son of Mary" [Mandaeans]. [48] 'Abdu'l-Bahá briefly describes Seth as one of the "sons of Adam". [49] Bahá'u'lláh identifies Idris with Hermes Trismegistus in a tablet. [50] He does not, however, specifically name Idris as the prophet of the Sabians. Sometimes referred to as Sabeans, this religious group has been mentioned in the Baha'i Faith among the many early religions of the previous dispensations. In Baha'i writing, `Abdu'l-Bahá' attributes the Sabeans are with possibly being the source of some foundations to the science of logic. [51]

Modern scholars

Chwolson (1856) differentiates between the pagan "pseudo-Sabians" of Harran with the real Sabians which he identifies as the marsh Arabs of Iraq. [52] The Caliph Mamun asked the pagan Harranians to choose a recognized religion, become Muslim, or die. They subsequently identified themselves with the Sabians. Chwolson also connected the Elcesaites with the Manicheans and with the Essenes. [53]

The Syriac Christian Nicolas Siouffi, [54][55] and later French Vice-Consul at Mosul, claimed to have identified 4,000 Sabians in the Mandaean population. [56] Siouffi's work was well received by the Theosophist G.R.S. Mead, [57] but scholars criticized the

estimates and study.[58]

A.H. Layard mentions in his travel diary meeting a "travelling silversmith" who was "Sabaeen or Christian of St. John". He estimated around 300~400 families to live in Shooshtar and Basra at the time. He also mentioned Sabians (spelled by Layard as Sabaeans) to be under oppression from Turkish and Persian authorities.[59]

Gavin Maxwell while travelling with explorer Wilfred Thesiger in the southern marshes of Iraq records in his diary that the Sabians were "People of the Book". The marsh Arabs called them "Subbi". They had their own script and religious practices. He estimated their number as "perhaps ten thousand". They dressed in the manner of the Sunnis. They lived only near moving (rather than stagnant) marsh water. In the mid-1950s they were considered the skilled craftsmen in the area who others turned to for metalwork. The work they were principally known for outside Iraq being silverwork.[60]

J. Hämeen-Anttila (2002,[61] 2006) notes that in the marsh areas of Southern Iraq, there was a continuous tradition of Mandaean religion, and that there was another pagan, or 'Sabian', centre in the tenth-century Islamic world centred around Harran.[61] These pagan Sabians are mentioned in the Nabataean corpus of Ibn Wahshiyya.[62]

Pagan Sabians

Among the various religious groups which in the 9th and 10th centuries came to be identified with the Sabians mentioned in the Quran, at least two groups were pagans. Moreover, both appear to have engaged in some kind of star worship.

Sabians of Harran

By far the most famous of these two are the Sabians of Harran, adherents of a Hellenized Semitic polytheistic religion that had managed to survive during the early Islamic period in the Upper Mesopotamian city of Harran.[15] They were described by Syriac Christian heresiographers as star worshippers.[14] Most of the scholars and courtiers working for the Abbasid and Buyid dynasties in Baghdad during the ninth–eleventh centuries who were known as 'Sabians' were either members of this Harranian religion or descendants of such members, most notably the Harranian astronomers and mathematicians Thabit ibn Qurra (died 901) and al-Battani (died 929).[63] There has been some speculation on whether these Sabian families in Baghdad, on whom most of our information about the Harranian Sabians indirectly depends, may have practiced a different, more philosophically inspired variant of the original Harranian religion.[64] However, apart from the fact that it contains traces of Babylonian and Hellenistic religion, and that an important place was taken by planets (to whom ritual sacrifices were made), little is known about Harranian Sabianism.[65] They have been variously described by scholars as (neo)-Platonists, Hermeticists, or Gnostics, but there is no firm evidence for any of these identifications.[66][c]

Lower Mesopotamian Sabians

Apart from the Sabians of Harran, there were also various religious groups living in the

Mesopotamian Marshes who were called the 'Sabians of the Marshes' (Arabic: Ṣābi'at al-baṭā'ih).[67] Though this name has often been understood as a reference to the Mandaeans, there was in fact at least one other religious group living in the marshlands of Southern Iraq.[68] This group still practiced a polytheistic Babylonian religion or similar, in which Mesopotamian gods had already been venerated in the form of planets and stars since antiquity.[69] According to Ibn al-Nadim, our only source for this specific group counted among the 'Sabians of the Marshes', they "follow the doctrines of the ancient Aramaeans [ʿalā maḏāhib an-Nabaṭ al-qadīm] and venerate the stars".[70] However, there is also a large corpus of texts by Ibn Wahshiyya (died c. 930), most famously his *Nabataean Agriculture*, which describes at length the customs and beliefs — many of them going back to Mesopotamian models — of Iraqi Sabians living in the Sawād.[71]

Contemporary Sabians

Mandaean Sabian court for marital dispute, Ahvaz, Iran (2015)

Today in Iraq and Iran, the Sabians are those that follow the teachings of John the Baptist. They are Mandaean Sabians.[20] They have been vulnerable to violence since the 2003 invasion of Iraq and numbered fewer than 5,000 in 2007. Before the invasion, the highest concentrations of Mandaeans were in Amarah, Nasiriyah and Basra. Besides these southern regions and Ahvaz in Iran, large numbers of Mandaeans were found in Baghdad, giving them easy access to the Tigris River. Today, they primarily live around Baghdad, where the high priest resides who conducts services and baptisms. Some have moved from Baghdad to Kurdistan where it is safer.[20]

See also

Category:Sabian scholars from the Abbasid Caliphate

Notes

Maghrebi manuscript, c. 1250–1350

Whether the 'Magians' listed in Quran 22:17 are to be understood as belonging to the People of the Book was a matter of dispute among medieval Muslim scholars. Islamic jurists generally granted Zoroastrians partial status as a People of the Book, though they disagreed on the extent to which legal privileges such as intermarriage with Muslims should be allowed (see Darrow 2003; Nasr et al. 2015, p. 834, verse 22:17).

On the Sabians of Harran, see further Dozy & de Goeje 1884; Margoliouth 1913; Tardieu 1986; Tardieu 1987; Peters 1990; Green 1992; Fahd 1960–2007; Strohmaier 1996; Genequand 1999; Elukin 2002; Stroumsa 2004; De Smet 2010.

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 De Blois 1960–2007; Fahd 1960–2007; Van Bladel 2017, pp. 5, 10.
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 This etymology is still upheld by some scholars, e.g., by Häberl 2009, p. 1.
 De Blois 2004.
 Green 1992, p. 106. That these enemies may have been the Jews is suggested by Genequand 1999, p. 127.
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 Ibn Hisham's story was thus explained by Julius Wellhausen, as cited by Green 1992, p. 106.
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"First, the books of the Nabatean corpus themselves claim to be translations from "ancient Syriac" (e.g. *Filaha* 1:5) made by Ibn Wahshiyya and transmitted to a student of his, Ibn az-Zayyat. The real authors of, e.g., *Filaha*, according to ..." Hämeen-Anttila (2002)[page needed]

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People and things in the Quran

Categories: Abrahamic religionsBaptismEarly Gnostic sectsGnostic religions and sectsHermes TrismegistusMandaeanism

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AI Overview

Yazidism (or Yazdanism) is a unique, ancient, monotheistic Kurdish religion blending ancient Iranian, Mesopotamian, and Sufi Islamic traditions, centered on worshipping one God and venerating Melek Taus (the Peacock Angel) as a key divine figure, often mislabeled as devil-worship due to misunderstandings of their beliefs, and primarily practiced by the Yazidi people in Kurdistan (northern Iraq, Syria, Turkey) with significant diaspora in Europe, known for their distinct culture, language (Kurdish dialects), and history of severe persecution.

Core Beliefs & Practices:

Monotheism: Belief in one supreme God (Xwedê) who created the universe.

Melek Taus (Peacock Angel): A chief angel, often misunderstood as Satan, but revered as God's primary agent in creation and world governance.

Heptad: Seven divine beings, including Melek Taus, who help God manage the world.

Syncretism: Blends elements from ancient Kurdish beliefs, Zoroastrianism, Sufism, and Mesopotamian religions.

Rituals: Includes infant circumcision and baptism, with sacred sites like Lalish.

The Yazidi People:

Ethnicity: An ancient Kurdish ethnoreligious group indigenous to Kurdistan.

Language: Speak Kurdish dialects (Kurmanji).

Homeland: Historically centered in northern Iraq (Sinjar, Nineveh plains) and parts of Syria, Turkey, Armenia, and Georgia.

Diaspora: Large communities now live in Germany, Europe, and North America due to historical persecution.

Persecution & Identity:

History: Have faced centuries of massacres, forced conversions, and displacement, particularly by Ottoman authorities and extremist groups like ISIL (ISIS), who committed genocide against them in 2014.

Misunderstandings: Often targeted due to confusion and false accusations (devil worship) stemming from their unique reverence for Melek Taus.

In essence, Yazidism is a unique spiritual path rooted in ancient Near Eastern traditions, preserved by a distinct people facing ongoing threats to their survival and identity.

Yazdânism - Wikipedia

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Yazidis

People

Yazidis, also spelled Yezidis, are a Kurdish-speaking endogamous religious group indigenous to Kurdistan, a geographical region in Western Asia that includes parts of Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran, with small numbers living in Armenia and Georgia.

Source:

Wikipedia

Languages spoken: Kurdish, Arabic Language, Kurdish (Latin, Iraq)

Armenia: 31,079 (2022 census)

Australia: 4,123 (2021 census)

Canada: 1,200 (2018 estimate)

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This article is about the religion. For the people, see Yazidis.

Yazidism

ئێزیدی, Êzdiyetî

The tomb of Sheikh Adi at Lalish, the holiest Yazidi temple

Type Ethnic religion

Classification Iranian religions[1][2]

Scripture Yazidi Book of Revelation

Yazidi Black Book

Theology Monotheistic

Mir Hazim Tahsin or Naif Dawud[3]

Baba Sheikh Sheikh Ali Ilyas

Language Kurdish (Kurmanji)

Headquarters Lalish, Nineveh Plains, Iraq

Origin 12th century

Kurdistan

Absorbed Adawiyya

Members Referred to as Yazidis: c. 200,000–1,000,000 (Encyclopædia Britannica est.[4])

c. 200,000–300,000 (Encyclopædia Iranica, 2004 est.[1])

Other name Sharfadin

Part of a series on

Kurdish history and Kurdish culture

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Yazidism

Main topics

The Heptad

List of Yazidi holy figures

Holy places

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Yazidism,[a] also known as Sharfadin,[b] is a monotheistic syncretic ethnic religion[9] its origin from Adawiyya Sufi order, which blended Sufi Sunni Islam, a local Kurdish veneration of Yazid ibn Mu'awiya and Umayyad dynasty, and local Kurdish peasant

belief of pre-Zoroastrian Iranic faith.[10][11] Its followers, called Yazidis, are a Kurdish-speaking community.[c]

Yazidism includes elements of ancient Iranian religions, as well as elements of Judaism, Church of the East, and Islam.[4] Yazidism is based on belief in one God who created the world and entrusted it into the care of seven Holy Beings, known as Angels.[5][12] [13] Preeminent among these Angels is Tawûsî Melek (lit. 'Peacock Angel', also spelled as Melek Taûs), who is the leader of the Angels and who has authority over the world.[5] [13][14] The religion of the Yazidis is a highly syncretistic one: Sufi influence and imagery can be seen in their religious vocabulary, especially in the terminology of their esoteric literature, but much of the mythology is non-Islamic, and their cosmogonies apparently have many points in common with those of ancient Iranian religions.[1]

Etymology

The name of Yazidi is a exonym.[13] The Yazidi people and religion are named after Sultan Ezid. Most modern historians hold that the name Ezid derives from the name of Yazid I (c. 646–689), the second Caliph of Umayyad Caliphate.[15] The Adawiyya existed in the Kurdish mountains before the 12th century, when Sheikh Adi ibn Musafir (1072–1078),[15] a Sufi of Umayyad descent,[16][4] settled there and attracted a following among the adherents of the movement. The name Yazidi seems to have been applied to the group because of his Umayyad origins.[15]

In Yazidi religious lore, there is no trace of any link between Sultan Ezid and the second Umayyad caliph.[17] Some scholars have derived the name Yazidi from word yazata, the name for a divine being in Old Iranian.[4][1]

History

Main article: Yazidis § History

Yazidism emerged from Adawiyya Sufi order, founded by Sheikh Adi ibn Musafir.[10] Who was an Arab Sufi mystic sheikh of Umayyad lineage. Adi ibn Musafir established his zāwiyya (Sufi convent) at Lalish. At the time, Lalish was inhabited by a peasant Kurdish community whose beliefs included elements of ancient Iranian religions, which, although similar, was not only distinct from Zoroastrianism but actually of pre-Zoroastrian origin, and local veneration of Yazid ibn Mu'āwiya. Over time, the ascetic practices and teachings of Sheikh 'Adī and his followers interacted with local beliefs, creating a syncretic religious system. After his death in 1162, his tomb became a pilgrimage site for both Muslims and non-Muslims, and Lalish became the central religious site for his followers. Over the following three centuries, this blend of Sufi Islamic and pre-Islamic Kurdish beliefs gradually developed into Yazidism as a distinct religion by the 15th century.[10]

Principal beliefs

Yazidi shrine of Mame Reshan, partially destroyed by ISIL, in the Sinjar Mountains. Yazidis believe in one God, to whom they refer as Xwedê, Xwedawend, Êzdan, and

Pedsha ('King'), and, less commonly, Ellah and Heq.[2][8][12][5][18] According to some Yazidi hymns (known as Qewls), God has 1,001 names, or 3,003 names according to other Qewls.[19][20] In Yazidism, fire, water, air, and the earth are sacred elements that are not to be polluted. During prayer Yazidis face towards the Sun, for which they were often called "sun worshippers". The Yazidi myth of creation begins with the description of the emptiness and the absence of order in the Universe. Prior to the World's creation, God created a dur (white pearl) in spiritual form from his own pure Light and alone dwelt in it.[21] First there was an esoteric world, and after that an exoteric world was created. Before the creation of this world God created seven Divine Beings (often called "Angels" in Yazidi literature) to whom he assigned all the world's affairs; the leader of the Seven Angels was appointed Tawûsî Melek ("Peacock Angel").[5][13][22] The end of Creation is closely connected with the creation of mankind and the transition from mythological to historical time.[8][14][12]

Tawûsî Melek

Main article: Tawûsî Melek

Melek Taûs, the Peacock Angel. This emblem features Tawûsê Melek in the center, the Sumerian digir on the left, and the domes above Sheikh 'Adî's tomb on the right.

Tawûsî Melek depicted as a peacock inside the display case on the grave of a Yazidi believer, cemetery of the Yazidi community in Hanover.

The Yazidis believe in a divine Triad.[5][13][22] The original, hidden God of the Yazidis is considered to be remote and inactive in relation to his creation, except to contain and bind it together within his essence.[5] His first emanation is Melek Taûs (Tawûsî Melek), the Peacock Angel, who functions as the ruler of the world.[5][13][22] The second hypostasis of the divine Triad is the Sheikh 'Adî. The third is Sultan Ezid. These are the three hypostases of the one God. The identity of these three is sometimes blurred, with Sheikh 'Adî considered to be a manifestation of Tawûsî Melek and vice versa; the same also applies to Sultan Ezid.[5] Yazidis are called Miletê Tawûsî Melek ("the nation of Tawûsî Melek").[23]

Muslims and Christians have erroneously associated and identified the Peacock Angel with their own conception of the unredeemed evil spirit Satan,[5][13][22][24][12] a misconception which has incited centuries of violent religious persecution of the Yazidis as "devil-worshippers".[5][13][22][25][26] Persecution of Yazidis has continued in their home communities within the borders of modern Iraq.[5][13][27]

Yazidis, however, believe Tawûsî Melek is not a source of evil or wickedness.[5][13][22] They consider him to be the leader of the archangels, not a fallen angel.[5][22][28][12]

The Yazidis of Kurdistan have been called many things, most notoriously 'devil-worshippers', a term used both by unsympathetic neighbours and fascinated Westerners. This sensational epithet is not only deeply offensive to the Yazidis themselves, but quite simply wrong.[29] Non-Yazidis have associated Melek Taûs with

Shaitan (Islamic/Arab name) or Satan, but Yazidis find that offensive and do not actually mention that name.[29]

Holy figures

Main article: List of Yazidi holy figures

Yezidis believe in Seven Angels, considered the emanations of God, who, In Yazidi creation stories, were created by God from his own light (nûr) before the creation of this world. God assigned all of the world's affairs to these seven Angels and Tawûsê Melek was appointed as the leader. The angels are also referred to as Heft Sirr ("the Seven Mysteries"). In this context, they have, so to speak, a part of God in themselves. Another word that is used for this is sur or sirr (literally: 'mystery'), which denotes a divine essence from which the angels were created.[30] This pure divine essence called Sur or Sirr has its own personality and will and is also called Sura Xudê ('the Sur of God').[31] This term refers to the essence of the Divine itself, that is, God. The Angels share this essence from their creator who is God.[30] In religious literature, these Angels are sometimes referred to as Cibrayîl, Ezrayîl, Mîkayîl, Şifqayîl, Derdayîl, Ezafîl, and Ezazîl. [32] The leader of these Angels is known as Tawûsê Melek, and the others are better known by the names of their earthly incarnations/representations: Fexreddin, Sheikh Shems, Nasirdin, Sejadin, Sheikh Obekr, and Shex Hesên (Şêxsîn).[33][2][12]

The Yazidi pantheon contains a total of 365 holy figures venerated by Yazidis,[34] designated by various special terms including Xudan, Xas, Mêr and Babçak. According to Yazidi beliefs, God is almighty and absolute, and the Xudans are a part of His power, moreover, in relation to nature, Yazidis believe in Xudans for most of natural elements and phenomena and they are regarded as divine powers that have control over these phenomena. In Yazidi mythology, the Xudans appeared after the creation of the world for the four elements of nature and their manifestations.[35]

Sheikh 'Adî

Main article: Sheikh Adi ibn Musafir

Entrance to the Yazidi Temple in Lalish

One of the important figures of Yazidism is Sheikh 'Adî ibn Musafir. Sheikh 'Adî ibn Musafir settled in the valley of Laliş (some 58 kilometres (36 mi) northeast of Mosul) in the Yazidi mountains in the early 12th century and founded the 'Adawiyya Sufi order. He died in 1162, and his tomb at Laliş is a focal point of Yazidi pilgrimage and the principal Yazidi holy site.[36] Yazidism has many influences: Sufi influence and imagery (especially taken from Mansur al-Hallaj)[37] can be seen in the religious vocabulary, especially in the terminology of the Yazidis' esoteric literature, but most of the theology, rituals, traditions, and festivals remains non-Islamic. Its cosmogony for instance has many points in common with those of ancient Iranian religions.[38][39][40][41][2]

Rebirth and concept of time

Yazidis believe in the rebirth of the soul. Like the Ahl-e Haqq, the Yazidis use the metaphor of a change of garment to describe the process, which plays an exceptional

role in Yazidi religiosity and is called the "change of [one's] shirt" (kirasgorîn). There is also a belief that some of the events from the time of creation repeat themselves in cycles of history. In Yazidism, different concepts of time coexist:[8]

An esoteric time sphere (Kurdish: enzel), This term denotes a state of being before the creation of the world. According to Yazidi cosmogony, there is God and a pearl in this stage.

Bedîl or dewr (a cyclic course of time): it means literally 'change, changing' or 'turning, revolution' and in the Yazidi context denotes a new period of time in the history of the world. Therefore, it may also mean 'renewing' or 'renewed' and designates the start of a renewed period of time.

A linear course, which runs from the start of the creation by God to the collective eschatological end point.

Three tofan ('storm, flood') i.e. catastrophes. It is believed that there are three big events during history named tofan that play a purificatory role, changing the quality of life in a positive manner. Each catastrophe, which ultimately brings renewal to the world, takes place through a basic element: the first through water (tofanê avê), the second through fire (tofanê agirî) and the last is connected with wind (air) (tofanê ba). It is believed that the first tofan has already occurred in the past and that the next tofan will occur through fire. According to this perception, the three sacred elements, namely water, fire and air, purify the fourth one, the earth. These events however are not be considered as eschatological events. They occur during the life of people. Although the purificatory events cause many deaths, ultimately life continues.[42]

In Yazidism, the older original concept of metempsychosis and the cyclic perception of the course of time is harmonised and coexists with the younger idea of a collective eschatology.[8]

Cosmogony and beginning of life

The Yazidi cosmogony is recorded in several sacred texts and traditions. It can therefore only be inferred and understood through an overall view of the sacred texts and traditions. The cosmogony can be divided into three stages:

Enzel – the state before the pearl burst (dur).

Developments immediately after the burst – cosmogony II

The creation of the earth and man – anthropogony[43][44]

The term Enzel is one of the frequently mentioned terms in the religious vocabulary and it comes up numerous times in the religious hymns, known as Qewls. For instance, in Qewlê Tawisî Melek:

"Ya Rebî ji Enzel de her tuyî qedîmî" (English: Oh, Creator of the Enzel, you are infinite) [45]

And Dûa Razanê:

Ezdayî me, ji direke enzelî me (English: I am a follower of God, I come from an "enzelî"

pearl)[45]

Thus, the term Enzel can also be referred to as a "pure, spiritual, immaterial and infinite world", "the Beyond" or "the sphere beyond the profane world". The Enzel stage describes a spaceless and timeless state and therefore illustrates a supernatural state. In this stage, initially there is only a God, who creates a pearl out of his own light, in which his shining throne (textê nûrî) is located.

Qewlê Bê Elif:

Padşê min bi xo efirandî dura beyzaye – My King created the white pearl from himself

Textê nûrî sedef – The shining throne in the pearl[45]

The Yazidi qewls mention the universe as having originated from a white pearl that existed in pre-eternity. At the beginning of the time prior to the creation, God emerged from the cosmic pearl, which rested on the horns of a bull that stood on the back of a fish. After God and the pearl separated, the universe burst out of the pearl and became visible as waves rippled across from pearl to form the primeval Cosmic Ocean.[19] As the pearl burst open, the beginning of the material universe was set in motion. Mihbet (meaning 'love') came into being and was laid as the original foundation, colours began to form, and red, yellow and white began to shine from the burst pearl.

The Yazidi religion has its own perception of the colours, which is seen in the mythology and shown through clothing taboos, in religious ceremonies, customs and rituals. Colours are perceived as the symbolizations of nature and the beginning of life, thus the emphasis of colours can be found in the creation myth. The colors white, red, green and yellow in particular are frequently emphasised. White is considered the color of purity and peace and is the main colour of the religious clothing of the Yazidis.[46][2][44]

Yazidi accounts of the creation differ significantly from those of the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), since they are derived from the Ancient Mesopotamian and Indo-Iranian traditions; therefore, Yazidi cosmogony is closer to those of Ancient Iranian religions, Yarsanism, and Zoroastrianism.[47][41]

Yazidi sacred texts

Further information: Yazidi literature

The religious literature of Yazidis is composed mostly of poetry which is orally transmitted in mainly Kurmanji and includes numerous genres, such as Qewl (religious hymn), Beyt (poem), Du'a (prayer), Dîrozge (another kind of prayer), Şehdetiya Dîn (the Declaration of the Faith), Terqîn (prayer for after a sacrifice), Pişt perde (literally 'under the veil', another genre), Qesîde (Qasida), Sema' (literally 'listening'), Lavij, Xerîbo, Xizêmok, Payîzok, and Robarîn.[48] The poetic literature is composed in an advanced and archaic language where more complex terms are used, which may be difficult to understand for those who are not trained in religious knowledge.[49] Therefore, they are

accompanied by some prosaic genres of the Yazidi literature that often interpret the contents of the poems and provide explanations of their contexts in the spoken language comprehensible among the common population. The prosaic genres include Çîrok and Çîvanok (legends and myths), and Dastan and Menal Pîrs (interpretations of religious hymns).[48][1] Yazidis also possess some written texts, such as the sacred manuscripts called mişûrs and individual collections of religious texts called cilvê and Keşkûl, although they are rarer and often safekept among Yazidis.[50] Yazidis are also said to have two holy books, Book of Revelation and Black Book whose authenticities are debated among scholars.[1]

Holy books

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Mishefa Reş

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Kitêba Cilwe

The Yazidi holy books are claimed to be the Book of Revelation and Black Book. Scholars generally agree that the manuscripts of both books published in 1911 and 1913 were forgeries written by non-Yazidis in response to Western travellers' and scholars' interest in the Yazidi religion; however, the material in them is consistent with authentic Yazidi traditions.[1] True texts of those names may have existed, but remain obscure. The real core texts of the religion that exist today are the hymns known as qawls; they have also been orally transmitted during most of their history, but are now being collected with the assent of the community, effectively transforming Yazidism into a scriptural religion.[51][1] The sacred texts had already been translated into English by the early 20th century.[52]

Qewl and Beyt

A very important genre of oral literature of the Yazidi community consists of religious hymns, called Qewls, which literally means 'word, speech' (from Arabic qawl).[53] The performers of these hymns, called the Qewal, constitute a distinct class within the Yazidi society. They are a veritable source of ancient Yazidi lore and are traditionally recruited from the non-religious members of other Kurdish tribes, principally the Dumilî and Hekarî.[54][13][8] The qewls are full of cryptic allusions and usually need to be accompanied by çiröks ('stories') that explain their context.[55][1]

Mishur

Mishurs are a type of sacred manuscripts that were written down in the 13th century and handed down to each lineage (ocax) of the Pirs; each of the manuscripts contain descriptions of the founder of the Pir lineage that they were distributed to, along with a list of Kurdish tribes and other priestly lineages that were affiliated with the founder.[56] The mishurs are safekept among the families of Pirs in particular places that are designated for their safekeeping; these places are referred to as stêr in Kurmanji.[57] According to the Yazidi tradition, there are a total of 40 mishurs which were distributed to

the 40 lineages of Pirs.[8]

Festivals

Pilgrims celebrating the Yazidi New Year festival at Lalish, Iraqi Kurdistan

Yazidi New Year

Main article: Yazidi New Year

The Yazidi New Year (Sersal) is called Çarşema sor ("Red Wednesday")^[21] or Çarşema Serê Nîsanê ("Wednesday at the beginning of April").^[58] It falls in spring, on the first Wednesday^[59] of the April and Nîsan months in the Julian and Seleucid calendars, i.e. the first Wednesday on or after 14 April according to the Gregorian calendar.^[60]

Feast of Êzî

Main article: Feast of Ezid

Yazidis celebrating a Yazidi ceremony called Tawwaf in the town of Bashiqa in Iraq. One of the most important Yazidi festivals is Îda Êzî ("Feast of Êzî"), which is celebrated in commemoration of the divine figure Sultan Ezid. Which every year takes place on the first Friday on or after 14 December. Before this festival, the Yazidis fast for three days, where nothing is eaten from sunrise to sunset. The Îda Êzî festival is celebrated in honor of God and the three days of fasting before are also associated with the ever shorter days before the winter solstice, when the Sun is less and less visible. With the Îda Êzî festival, the fasting time is ended. The festival is often celebrated with music, food, drinks and dance.^[61]

Tawûsgeran

Main article: Tawûsgeran

Another important festival is the Tawûsgeran, where Qewals and other religious dignitaries visit Yazidi villages, bringing the sinjaq, sacred images of a peacock symbolizing Tawûsê Melek. These are venerated, fees are collected from the pious, sermons are preached and holy water and berat (small stones from Lalish) distributed.^[62]^[63]

Feast of the Assembly

Main article: Feast of the Assembly

The greatest festival of the year is the Cêjna Cemaiya ('Feast of the Assembly'), which includes an annual pilgrimage to the tomb of Sheikh 'Adî' (Şêx Adî) in Lalish, northern Iraq. The festival is celebrated from 6 October to 13 October,^[64] in honor of the Sheikh Adi. It is an important time for cohesion.^[65]

If possible, Yazidis make at least one pilgrimage to Lalish during their lifetime, and those living in the region try to attend at least once a year for the Feast of the Assembly in autumn.^[12]

Tiwaf

Main article: Tiwaf

Tiwafs are yearly feasts of shrines and their holy beings which constitute an important part of Yazidi religious and communal life. Every village that contains a shrine holds annual tiwafs in the name of the holy being to which the shrine is dedicated.[34][66]

Religious practices

Prayers

Prayers occupy a special status in Yazidi literature. They contain important symbols and religious knowledge connected with the Holy Men, God, and daily situations. The prayers are mostly private and as a rule they are not performed in public. Yazidis pray towards the sun,[67] usually privately, or the prayers are recited by one person during a gathering. The prayers are classified according to their own content. There are:

Prayers dedicated to God and holy beings

Prayers of Yazidi castes

Prayers for specific occasions

Rite of passage prayers

Prayers against health problems and illnesses

Daily prayers

Prayers connected with the nature, i.e. the Moon, stars, Sun, etc.[68]

Customs

Baptism of a Yazidi child in Lalish

Children are baptised at birth and circumcision is not required, but is practised by some due to regional customs.[69] The Yazidi baptism is called mor kirin (literally: 'to seal').

Traditionally, Yazidi children are baptised at birth with water from the Kaniya Sipî ('White Spring') at Lalish. It involves pouring holy water from the spring on the child's head three times.[70][71]

Purity and taboos

The Chel Mera Temple, or "40 Men Temple", on the highest peak of the Sinjar Mountains in northern Iraq. The temple is so old that no one remembers how it came to have that name, but it is believed to derive from the burial of forty men on the mountaintop site.[72]

Many Yazidis consider pork to be prohibited. However, many Yazidis living in Germany began to view this taboo as a foreign belief from Judaism or Islam and not part of Yazidism, and therefore abandoned this rule.[73] Furthermore, in a BBC interview in April 2010, Baba Sheikh, the spiritual leader of all Yazidis, stated that ordinary Yazidis may eat what they want, but the religious clergy refrain from certain vegetables (including cabbage) because "they cause gases".[74]

Some Yazidis in Armenia and Georgia who converted to Christianity, still identify as Yazidis even after converting,[75] but are not accepted by the other Yazidis as Yazidis.

[76]

Religious organisation

Main article: Yazidi social organization

The Yazidis are strictly endogamous;^{[12][77]} members of the three Yazidi castes, the murids, sheikhs, and pirs, marry only within their group.^[12]

There are several religious duties that are performed by several dignitaries, such as the Mir Hejj (Prince of the Pilgrimage), Sheikh el-Wazir (who oversees the sanctuary of Sheikh Shems at Lalish), Pire Esbiya (treasurer of the sanctuary of Sheikh Shems at Lalish), Mijewir (local shrine custodian), Baba Chawush (guardian of the sanctuary of Sheikh Adi), and others.^[19]

See also

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History portal

List of Yazidi holy places

List of Yazidi saints

List of Yazidi settlements

Persecution of Yazidis

Notes

Kurdish: ئێزدیتی, romanized: Êzdîtî or Êzdîyetî

Kurdish: شه‌رفه‌دین, romanized: Şerfedîn^{[5][6][7][8]}

"The Yazidis' cultural practices are observably Kurdish, and almost all speak Kurmanji (Northern Kurdish), with the exception of the villages of Baʿşıqa and Baḥzānēin northern Iraq, where Arabic is spoken. Kurmanji is the language of almost all the orally transmitted religious traditions of the Yazidis."

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Yazidis

Overviews

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History, culture and religion

Deq (tattoo)EndogamyFeast of EzidFeast of the AssemblyTawûsgeranTiwafYazidi Black BookYazidi Book of RevelationYazidi literatureYazidi New YearYazidi social organization

Geography and places

List of Yazidi communities in ArmeniaList of Yazid communitiess in

IraqAknaLichDuhokLalishList of Yazidi holy placesLusaknMam Rashan ShrineNineveh (Nineveh Plains, Nineveh Governorate)QibarQuba Mêrê DîwanêSharfadin TempleSilat BridgeSinjar MountainsSultan Ezid TempleTutak, Turkey

Entities

It's On UList of Yazidi organizationsYazdaYazidi AcademyYazidi HouseYazidi

HouseYazidi Movement for Reform and ProgressYezidi National Union ULE

Milita and Paramilitary

AsayishÊzîdxan Protection ForceÊzîdxan Women's UnitsSinjar AllianceSinjar Resistance Units

People and religious figures

List of Iraqi YazidisAmadinEzdina MirFexredînKhatuna FekhraMahmoud EzidiMela Huseynê BateyîMusa SorNasirdînPir Ali (Yazidi saint)Pir Mehmed ReshanRabia of BasraSharaf ad-Din ibn al-HasanShehid ibn JerrSheikh Adi ibn MusafirSheikh Hasan ibn Sheikh Adi IISheikh MandSheikh ObekrSheikh ShemsSicadînTawûsî Melek

Persecution, violence, and genocide

April 2007 Yazidi massacreQahtaniyah bombings2011 Duhok riotsDecember 2014 Sinjar offensiveYazidi genocideHuman rights in Islamic State-controlled territoryİsmail ÖzdenIt's On UNovember 2015 Sinjar offensiveSinjar massacreSlavery in 21st-century jihadismThe Last Girl (memoir)

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AI Overview

Zoroastrianism And Persian Mythology: The Foundation Of ...

Zoroastrianism is an ancient Persian monotheistic religion founded by the prophet Zarathushtra (Zoroaster), centered on the worship of one God, Ahura Mazda, emphasizing a cosmic struggle between good (Spenta Mainyu) and evil (Angra Mainyu), with humans choosing sides through "Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds," and culminating in a final judgment and restoration of the world. Its sacred text is the Avesta, and fire is a revered symbol of God's light and purity, not worshipped itself, with adherents known as Parsis in India and Iranians in Iran.

Key Beliefs & Practices

One God: Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord, is the uncreated, all-good Creator.

Cosmic Dualism: A constant battle between Ahura Mazda's creative, orderly force and Angra Mainyu's destructive, chaotic force.

Ethical Living: Following the maxim "Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds" to help defeat evil and bring about paradise on Earth.

Sacred Texts: The Avesta, especially the Gathas (hymns by Zoroaster).

Worship: Communal worship in fire temples (Dar-e-Mehr), where a sacred fire burns as a symbol of divine energy.

Symbolism: Fire (purity, light), white (purity), the Kusti (sacred girdle).

History & Influence

Origins: Founded by Zarathushtra in ancient Persia (Iran), potentially over 3,000 years ago.

State Religion: Became the state religion of powerful Persian empires.

Decline: Declined significantly after the Muslim conquest of Persia in the 7th century CE.

Modern Communities: Descendants (Parsis) fled to India, forming vibrant communities alongside smaller groups in Iran and worldwide.

Influence: Significantly influenced Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, particularly concepts of a final judgment and resurrection.

Zoroastrianism | Definition, Beliefs, Founder, Holy Book, & Facts

Dec 1, 2025 — The ancient Greeks saw in Zoroastrianism the archetype of the dualistic view of the world and of human destiny. Zarathu...

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Criticism of Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism in the United...

India

Iran

People also ask

What does Zoroastrianism believe?

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Are Jews and Zoroastrians the same?

Feedback

Things to know

History

.

What is the history of Zoroastrianism?

Holy Book

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What is the holy book of Zoroastrianism?

Founder

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Who founded Zoroastrianism?

Founding Date

.

When was Zoroastrianism founded?

Role of Fire

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What is the role of fire in Zoroastrianism?

Zoroastrianism | Definition, Beliefs, Founder, Holy Book, & ...

Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com › topic › Zoroastrianism>

Dec 1, 2025 — Zoroastrianism is one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions, having originated in ancient Persia. It contains both monotheistic and dualistic elements.

Beliefs and mythology

Ancient Iranian religion

Dualism

Zarathushtra

What people are saying

1:21

The Tower of Silence reflects an ancient belief in purity. Today, the practice is banned in Iran and heavily restricted in India. #TowerOfSilence #Zoroastrianism #AncientRituals

#CulturalHistory #Dakhma #ReligionAndCulture #ForgottenHistory #deaf #ai #viral

910+ reactions · 1 day ago

tassilosieben

Facebook

"Gâh" to "Salah": A question on ritual continuity between Zoroastrianism and Islam

Popular comment · I would say Islam probably inherited it from Judaism which also has daily prayers, 3 if i recall correctly, and also ablution with water.

.

10+ comments · 5 days ago

r/religion

Reddit

Zoroastrianism is an ancient monotheistic religion founded by the prophet Zoroaster.

Many Iranians now are rediscovering their Zoroastrianism after enduring horrors under the Mullahs regime, I had the privilege to visit some of the remaining sites in Iran. Here

is one of my photos 📷

30+ likes · 1 week ago

Nervana_1 · X

Middle East commentator

0:41

Before the advent of Islam, Zoroastrian thought influenced the architecture of Iran and the surrounding regions for thousands of years. After the Sassanian empire was invaded by the Arabs, Zoroastrian temples similar to the one in this video were converted to mosques. Eventually, new mosques would use the parti of the Zoroastrian temple in

their design. Since then, Zoroastrianism has been suppressed by the ruling dynasties of the region. Miraculously, it has managed to stay alive to this day and thanks to religious freedoms in countries such as the United States, it is beginning to flourish around the world once again. This 3D model was manually modeled and rendered by @kaveh_history without the use of Ai. It is the fire temple built by Ardashir 1 in Piruzabad, Iran. Ardashir was the founder of the ancient Sassanian empire which thrived for over 4 centuries. Follow the @amzsociety to learn more about Zoroastrianism and its practice in the United States. #history #architectu
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25:07
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Most of my life I stood somewhere between agnosticism and Christianity. I saw Christianity more as a cultural...
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Reddit

Contrary to the popular belief, Zoroastrianism is not a monotheistic religion but an henotheistic one: Zoroastrians believe in a wide range of minor deities with one supreme god (Ahura Mazda).
120+ likes · Oct 13, 2025

BiruniKhorasan · X
Focus on Central Asia's heritage
Is Zoroastrianism a problem for the divine origin of Judaism and Christianity?
Popular comment · I believe that Zoroaster had some hint at the true God but it wasn't time yet. Zoroastrianism isn't as close to Judaism as some sceptics like to claim. It's dualism raises doubts about the genuine monotheism of the religion. However, I do think that Zoroaster recognized the problem of paganism and clearly knew that there was truth beyond Persian paganism.
.

40+ comments · 1 month ago

r/Catholicism
Reddit

1:03

The Eternal Fire at Chak Chak Temple, #Iran. Zoroastrianism was the predominant religion of Ancient #Persia and the first monotheistic religion in the world.

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Facebook

17:21

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The sacred role of fire

.
The symbolism and significance of fire in Zoroastrianism is explored, referencing fire temples and the continuously burning flame in Yazd.

Zoroastrianism's influence on other faiths

.
Zoroastrianism's influence on major religions like Judaism and Christianity is acknowledged, particularly regarding concepts of heaven, hell, and final judgment.
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The main belief of Zoroastrianism is that you choose your own path, and to live by good

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Religion: Zoroastrianism

BBC

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Zoroastrianism is one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions. It was founded by the Prophet Zoroaster in ancient Iran approximately 3500 years ago.

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Zoroastrianism

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Faravahar, one of the most prominent symbols of Zoroastrianism, on the Fire Temple of Yazd, Iran

Type	Ethnic religion
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Classification Iranian

Scripture	Avesta
1. The world is created by God.	1. The world is created by Ahura Mazda.
2. God is the creator and sustainer of the world.	2. Ahura Mazda is the creator and sustainer of the world.
3. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.	3. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.
4. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.	4. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.
5. The world will be recreated by God.	5. The world will be recreated by Ahura Mazda.
6. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.	6. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.
7. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.	7. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.
8. The world will be recreated by God.	8. The world will be recreated by Ahura Mazda.
9. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.	9. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.
10. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.	10. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.
11. The world will be recreated by God.	11. The world will be recreated by Ahura Mazda.
12. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.	12. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.
13. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.	13. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.
14. The world will be recreated by God.	14. The world will be recreated by Ahura Mazda.
15. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.	15. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.
16. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.	16. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.
17. The world will be recreated by God.	17. The world will be recreated by Ahura Mazda.
18. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.	18. The world is a good place, but it is being corrupted by evil forces.
19. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.	19. The world will be destroyed by evil forces.
20. The world will be recreated by God.	20. The world will be recreated by Ahura Mazda.

Theology	Monotheistic/Dualistic[1][2]
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Region Greater Iran (historically)
Language Avestan
Founder Zoroaster (traditional)
Origin c. mid-6th century BCE
Iranian Plateau
Separated from Proto-Indo-Iranian religion
Separations
ZurvanismMazdakism
Number of followers 110,000–120,000 (Zoroastrians)

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Part of a series on
Zoroastrianism

Primary topics
Divine entities
Scripture and worship
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Zoroastrianism,[a] also called Mazdayasna[b] or Behdin,[c] is an Iranian religion centred on the Avesta and the teachings of Zarathushtra Spitama, who is more commonly referred to by the Greek translation, Zoroaster (Greek: Ζωροάστρης Zōroastris). Among the world's oldest organized faiths, its adherents exalt an uncreated, benevolent, and all-wise deity known as Ahura Mazda (𐬰𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬚𐬎𐬌𐬵𐬭𐬀), who is hailed as the supreme being of the universe. Opposed to Ahura Mazda is Angra Mainyu (𐬰𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬚𐬎𐬌𐬵𐬭𐬀), who is personified as a destructive spirit and the adversary of all things that are good. As such, the Zoroastrian religion combines a dualistic cosmology of good and evil with an eschatological outlook predicting the ultimate triumph of Ahura Mazda over evil.[1] Opinions vary among scholars as to whether Zoroastrianism is monotheistic,[1] polytheistic,[2] henotheistic,[3] or a combination of all three.[4] Zoroastrianism shaped Iranian culture and history, while scholars differ on whether it significantly influenced ancient Western philosophy and the Abrahamic religions,[5][6] or gradually reconciled with other religions and traditions, such as Christianity and Islam.[7]

Originating from Zoroaster's reforms of the ancient Iranian religion, Zoroastrianism began during the Avestan period (possibly as early as the 2nd millennium BCE), but was first recorded in the mid-6th century BCE. For the following millennium, it was the official religion of successive Iranian polities, beginning with the Achaemenid Empire,

which formalized and institutionalized many of its tenets and rituals, and ending with the Sasanian Empire, which revitalized the faith and standardized its teachings.[8] In the 7th century CE, the rise of Islam and the ensuing Muslim conquest of Iran marked the beginning of the decline of Zoroastrianism. The persecution of Zoroastrians by the early Muslims in the nascent Rashidun Caliphate prompted much of the community to migrate to the Indian subcontinent, where they were granted asylum and became the progenitors of today's Parsis. Once numbering in the millions, the world's total Zoroastrian population is estimated to comprise between 110,000 and 120,000 people, with most of them residing either in India (50,000–60,000), in Iran (15,000–25,000), or in North America (22,000). The religion is thought to be declining due to restrictions on conversion, strict endogamy, and low birth rates.

The central beliefs and practices of Zoroastrianism are contained in the Avesta, a compendium of sacred texts assembled over several centuries. Its oldest and most central component are the Gathas, purported to be the direct teachings of Zoroaster and his account of conversations with Ahura Mazda. These writings are part of a major section of the Avesta called the Yasna, which forms the core of Zoroastrian liturgy. Zoroaster's religious philosophy divided the early Iranian gods of Proto-Indo-Iranian paganism into emanations of the natural world—the ahura and the daeva; the former class consisting of divinities to be revered and the latter class consisting of divinities to be rejected and condemned. Zoroaster proclaimed that Ahura Mazda was the supreme creator and sustaining force of the universe, working in gētīg (the visible material realm) and mēnōg (the invisible spiritual and mental realm) through the Amesha Spenta, a class of seven divine entities that represent various aspects of the universe and the highest moral good. Emanating from Ahura Mazda is Spenta Mainyu (the Holy or Bountiful Spirit), the source of life and goodness,[9] which is opposed by Angra Mainyu (the Destructive or Opposing Spirit), who is born from Aka Manah (evil thought). Angra Mainyu was further developed by Middle Persian literature into Ahriman (𐬐𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬌), Ahura Mazda's direct adversary.

Zoroastrian doctrine holds that, within this cosmic dichotomy, human beings have the choice between Asha (truth, cosmic order), the principle of righteousness or "rightness" that is promoted and embodied by Ahura Mazda, and Druj (falsehood, deceit), the essential nature of Angra Mainyu that expresses itself as greed, wrath, and envy.[10] Thus, the central moral precepts of the religion are good thoughts (hwnata), good words (hakhta), and good deeds (hvarshta), which are recited in many prayers and ceremonies.[5][11][12] Many of the practices and beliefs of ancient Iranian religion can still be seen in Zoroastrianism, such as reverence for nature and its elements, such as water (aban). Fire (atar) is held by Zoroastrians to be particularly sacred as a symbol of Ahura Mazda himself, serving as a focal point of many ceremonies and rituals, and serving as the basis for Zoroastrian places of worship, which are known as fire temples.

Etymology

The name Zoroaster (Ζωροάστηρ) is a Greek rendering of the Avestan name

Zarathustra. He is known as Zartosht and Zardosht in Persian and Zaratosht in Gujarati. [13] The Zoroastrian name of the religion is Mazdayasna, which combines Mazda- with the Avestan word yasna, meaning "worship, devotion". [14] In English, an adherent of the faith is commonly called a Zoroastrian or a Zarathustrian. An older expression still used today is Behdin, meaning "of the good religion", deriving from beh < Middle Persian weh 'good' + din < Middle Persian dēn < Avestan daēnā". [15] In the Zoroastrian liturgy, this term is used as a title for a lay individual who has been formally inducted into the religion in a Navjote ceremony, in contrast to the priestly titles of osta, osti, ervad (hirbod), mobed and dastur. [16]

The first surviving reference to Zoroaster in English scholarship is attributed to Thomas Browne (1605–1682), who briefly refers to Zoroaster in his 1643 *Religio Medici*. [17] The term Mazdaism (/ˈmæzdə.ɪzəm/) is an alternative form in English used as well for the faith, taking Mazda- from the name Ahura Mazda and adding the suffix -ism to suggest a belief system. [18]

Theology

See also: Criticism of Zoroastrianism and Religious influences on Zoroastrianism
The theological category of Zoroastrianism is hard to define. The reasons are the difficulties in assigning precise dates to the principal texts and the fact that many contain much older material. Furthermore, Zoroastrianism shaped only slowly over time and was not complete even by the time of the Muslim conquest of Persia. Polytheistic, monotheistic, and dualistic strands can be identified in the wider Zoroastrian tradition, with dualism being the dominant tendency. The major difference to Manichaeism lies in the insistence of good in the creation account. [19]

Some scholars believe Zoroastrianism started as an Indo-Iranian polytheistic religion: according to Yujin Nagasawa, "like the rest of the Zoroastrian texts, the Old Avesta does not teach monotheism". [20] By contrast, Md. Sayem characterizes Zoroastrianism as being one of the oldest monotheistic religions in the world. [21]

Zoroastrians treat Ahura Mazda as the supreme god, but believe in lesser divinities known as yazatas ("beings worthy of worship"), who share some similarities with the angels in Abrahamic religions. [22] These yazatas include Anahita, Sraosha, Mithra, Rashnu, and Tishtrya. Historian Richard Foltz has put forth evidence that Iranians of the pre-Islamic era worshipped all these figures; especially the gods Mithra and Anahita. [23]

Prods Oktor Skjærvø states Zoroastrianism is henotheistic, and "a dualistic and polytheistic religion, but with one supreme god, who is the father of the ordered cosmos". [3] Brian Arthur Brown states that this is unclear, because historic texts present a conflicting picture, ranging from Zoroastrianism's belief in "one god, two gods, or a best god henotheism". [24] Economist Mario Ferrero suggests that Zoroastrianism transitioned from polytheism to monotheism due to political and economic pressures. [25]

In the 19th century, through contact with Western academics and missionaries, Zoroastrianism experienced a massive theological change that still affects it today. The Rev. John Wilson led various missionary campaigns in India against the Parsi community, disparaging the Parsis for their "dualism" and "polytheism" and as having unnecessary rituals while declaring the Avesta to not be "divinely inspired". This caused mass dismay in the relatively uneducated Parsi community, which blamed its priests and led to some conversions towards Christianity.[citation needed]

The arrival of the German orientalist and philologist Martin Haug led to a rallied defense of the faith through Haug's reinterpretation of the Avesta through Christianized and European orientalist lens. Haug postulated that Zoroastrianism was solely monotheistic with all other divinities reduced to the status of angels while Ahura Mazda became both omnipotent and the source of evil as well as good. Haug's thinking was subsequently disseminated as a Parsi interpretation, thus corroborating Haug's theory, and the idea became so popular that it is now almost universally accepted as doctrine (though being re-evaluated in modern Zoroastrianism and academia).[26] It has been argued by Almut Hintze that this designation of monotheism is not wholly perfect and that Zoroastrianism instead has its "own form of monotheism" which combines elements of dualism and polytheism.[27] Farhang Mehr asserts that Zoroastrianism is principally monotheistic with some dualistic elements.[28]

Lenorant and Chevallier assert that Zoroastrianism's concept of divinity covers both being and mind as immanent entities, describing Zoroastrianism as having a belief in an immanent self-creating universe with consciousness as its special attribute, thereby putting Zoroastrianism in the pantheistic fold sharing its origin with Indian Hinduism.[29] [30]

Nature of the divine

Zoroastrianism contains multiple classes of divine beings, who are typically organised into tiers and spheres of influence.[citation needed]

Ahuras

Main article: Ahura

The Ahura are a class of divine beings "inherited by Zoroastrianism from the prehistoric Indo-Iranian religion. In the Rig Veda, asura denotes the "older gods", such as the "Father Asura", Varuna, and Mitra, who originally ruled over the primeval undifferentiated Chaos." [31]

Ahura Mazda

Main article: Ahuramazda

Ahura Mazda, also known as Oromasdes, Ohrmazd, Ormazd, Ormusd, Hoormazd, Harzoo, Hormazd, Hormaz and Hurmz, is the creator deity and the supreme god in Zoroastrianism. Ahura Mazda stands for the dual deity Mitrā́-Váruṇā of the Hindu holy book known as the Rigveda.[31]

According to scholars, Ahura Mazda is an uncreated, omniscient, omnipotent and benevolent God who has created the spiritual and material existences out of infinite light, and maintains the cosmic law of Asha. He is the first and most invoked spirit in Yasna, and is unrivaled, has no equals and presides over all creation.[32] In Avesta, Ahura Mazda is the only true God, and the representation of goodness, light, and truth. He is in conflict with the evil spirit Angra Mainyu, the representation of evil, darkness, and deceit. Angra Mainyu's goal is to tempt humans away from Ahura Mazda. Notably, Angra Mainyu is not a creation of Ahura Mazda but an independent entity.[33] The belief in Ahura Mazda, the "Lord of Wisdom" who is considered an all-encompassing Deity and the only existing one, is the foundation of Zoroastrianism.[34]

Ahura Mithra

Main article: Mithraism

Mitra, also called Mithra, was originally an Indo-Iranian god of "covenant, agreement, treaty, alliance, promise." Mitra is considered a being worthy of worship and is "characterized by riches".[35]

Yazata

Main article: Yazatas

The Yazata (Avestan: 𐬵𐬀𐬰𐬀𐬎𐬎𐬀) are divine beings worshiped by song and sacrifice in Zoroastrianism, in accordance with the Avesta. The word 'Yazata' is derived from 'Yazdan', the Old Persian word for 'god',[36] and literally means "divinity worthy of worship or veneration". As a concept, it also contains a wide range of other meanings; though generally signifying (or used as an epithet of) a divinity.[37][38]

The origins of Yazata are varied, with many also being featured as gods in Hinduism, or other Iranian religions. In modern Zoroastrianism, the Yazata are considered holy emanations of the creator, always devoted to him and obey the will of Ahura Mazda. While subject to repression by the Islamic Caliphate, the Yazata were often framed as "angels" to counter accusation of polytheism (shirk).[39] According to the Avesta The Yazata assist Ahura Mazda in his battle against the evil spirit, and are hypostases of moral or physical aspects of creation. The yazatas collectively are "the good powers under Ahura Mazda", who is "the greatest of the yazatas".[36]

Notable Yazatas

Ahura Mazda

Mitra or Mithra

Anahita – formerly an Iranian water goddess

Ātar (Fire)

Rashnu, one of the three judges who pass judgment on the souls of people after death
Sraosha or Srōsh

Verethragna – who may be the Vedic god Indra

Amesha Spentas

Yazatas are further divided into Amesha Spentas, their "ham-kar" or "Collaborators" who

are Lower Ranking divinities,[40] and also certain healing plants, primordial creatures, the fravashis of the dead, and certain prayers that are themselves considered holy.

The Amesha Spentas and their "ham-kar" or "collaborator" Yazatas are as follows:

Vohu Manah + Mah / Geush Urvan / Ram
Asha Vahishta + Atar / Sraosha / Verethraghna
Kshatra Vairya + Khwar / Mithra / Asman / Anaghran
Spenta Armaiti + Ap / Daena / Ashi / Manthra Spenta
Haurvatat + Tishtriya / Fravashi / Vata
Ameretat + Rashnu / Arshtat / Zamyad[40]
Principal beliefs
Tenets of faith

Faravahar, one of the primary symbols of Zoroastrianism, believed to be the depiction of a Fravashi or the Khvarenah.

In Zoroastrianism, Ahura Mazda is the beginning and the end, the creator of everything that can and cannot be seen, the eternal and uncreated, the all-good and source of Asha.[14] In the Gathas, the most sacred texts of Zoroastrianism thought to have been composed by Zoroaster himself, Zoroaster acknowledged the highest devotion to Ahura Mazda, with worship and adoration also given to Ahura Mazda's manifestations (Amesha Spenta) and the other ahuras (Yazata) that support Ahura Mazda.[41]

Daena (din in modern Persian and meaning "that which is seen") is representative of the sum of one's spiritual conscience and attributes, which through one's choice Asha is either strengthened or weakened in the Daena.[42] Traditionally, the manthras (similar to the Hindu sacred utterance mantra) prayer formulas, are believed to be of immense power and the vehicles of Asha and creation used to maintain good and fight evil.[43] Daena should not be confused with the fundamental principle of Asha, believed to be the cosmic order which governs and permeates all existence, and the concept of which governed the life of the ancient Indo-Iranians. For these, asha was the course of everything observable—the motion of the planets and astral bodies; the progression of the seasons; and the pattern of daily nomadic herdsman life, governed by regular metronomic events such as sunrise and sunset, and was strengthened through truth-telling and following the Threefold Path.[44]

All physical creation (getig) was thus determined to run according to a master plan— inherent to Ahura Mazda—and violations of the order (druj) were violations against creation, and thus violations against Ahura Mazda.[45] This concept of asha versus the druj should not be confused with Western and especially Christian notions of good versus evil, for although both forms of opposition express moral conflict, the asha versus druj concept is more systemic and less personal, representing, for instance, chaos (that opposes order); or "uncreation", evident as natural decay (that opposes creation); or more simply "the lie" (that opposes truth and goodness).[44] Moreover, in the role as the one uncreated creator of all, Ahura Mazda is not the creator of druj, which is "nothing",

anti-creation, and thus (likewise) uncreated and developed as the antithesis of existence through choice.[46]

A Parsi Wedding, 1905

In this schema of asha versus druj, mortal beings (both humans and animals) play a critical role, for they too are created. Here, in their lives, they are active participants in the conflict, and it is their spiritual duty to defend Asha, which is under constant assault and would decay in strength without counteraction.[44] Throughout the Gathas, Zoroaster emphasizes deeds and actions within society and accordingly extreme asceticism is frowned upon in Zoroastrianism but moderate forms are allowed within.[47]

Humata, Huxta, Huvarshta (Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds), the Threefold Path of Asha, is considered the core maxim of Zoroastrianism especially by modern practitioners. In Zoroastrianism, good transpires for those who do righteous deeds for its own sake, not for the search of reward. Those who do evil are said to be attacked and confused by the druj and are responsible for aligning themselves back to Asha by following this path.[48] There is also a heavy emphasis on spreading happiness, mostly through charity,[49] and respecting the spiritual equality and duty of both men and women.[50]

Central to Zoroastrianism is the emphasis on moral choice, to choose the responsibility and duty for which one is in the mortal world, or to give up this duty and so facilitate the work of druj. Similarly, predestination is rejected in Zoroastrian teaching and the absolute free will of all conscious beings is core, with even divine beings having the ability to choose. Humans bear responsibility for all situations they are in, and in the way they act toward one another. Reward, punishment, happiness, and grief all depend on how individuals live their lives.[51]

In Zoroastrian tradition, life is a temporary state in which a mortal is expected to participate actively in the continuing battle between Asha and Druj. Prior to its incarnation at the birth of the child, the urvan (soul) of an individual is still united with its fravashi (personal/higher spirit), which has existed since Ahura Mazda created the universe. Prior to the splitting off of the urvan, the fravashi participates in the maintenance of creation led by Ahura Mazda. During the life of a given individual, the fravashi acts as a source of inspiration to perform good actions and as a spiritual protector. The fravashis of ancestors cultural, spiritual, and heroic, associated with illustrious bloodlines, are venerated and can be called upon to aid the living.[52]

The religion states that active and ethical participation in life through good deeds formed from good thoughts and good words is necessary to ensure happiness and to keep chaos at bay. This active participation is a central element in Zoroaster's concept of free will, and Zoroastrianism as such rejects extreme forms of asceticism and monasticism but historically has allowed for moderate expressions of these concepts.[47] On the fourth day after death, the urvan is reunited with its fravashi, whereupon the experiences

of life in the material world are collected for use in the continuing battle for good in the spiritual world. For the most part, Zoroastrianism does not have a notion of reincarnation; albeit Followers of Ilm-e-Kshnoom in India, among other currently non-traditional opinions, believe in reincarnation and practice vegetarianism.[53]

Zoroastrianism's emphasis on the protection and veneration of nature and its elements has led some to proclaim it as the "world's first proponent of ecology." [54] The Avesta and other texts call for the protection of water, earth, fire, and air making it, in effect, an ecological religion: "It is not surprising that Mazdaism... is called the first ecological religion. The reverence for Yazatas (divine spirits) emphasizes the preservation of nature" (Avesta: Yasnas 1.19, 3.4, 16.9; Yashts 6.3–4, 10.13). [55] However, this particular assertion is limited to natural forces held as emanations of asha by the fact that early Zoroastrians had a duty to exterminate "evil" species, a dictate no longer followed in modern Zoroastrianism. [56] Although there have been various theological statements supporting vegetarianism in Zoroastrianism's history and those who believe that Zoroaster was vegetarian. [57]

Zoroastrianism is not entirely uniform in theological and philosophical thought, especially with historical and modern influences having a significant impact on individual and local beliefs, practices, values, and vocabulary, sometimes merging with tradition and in other cases displacing it. [58] The ultimate purpose in the life of a practicing Zoroastrian is to become an ashavan (a master of Asha) and to bring happiness into the world, which contributes to the cosmic battle against evil. The core teachings of Zoroastrianism include:

Following the threefold path of Asha: Humata, Hūxta, Huvarshta (lit. 'good thoughts, good words, good deeds'). [48]

Practicing charity to keep one's soul aligned with Asha and thus with spreading happiness. [49]

The spiritual equality and duty of men and women alike. [50]

Being good for the sake of goodness and without the hope of reward (see Ashem Vohu).

Cosmology

Main article: Zoroastrian cosmology

Cosmogony

According to the Zoroastrian creation myth, there is one universal, transcendent, all-good, and uncreated supreme creator deity Ahura Mazda, [14] or the "Wise Lord" (Ahura meaning "Lord" and Mazda meaning "Wisdom" in Avestan). [14] [59] Zoroaster keeps the two attributes separate as two different concepts in most of the Gathas yet sometimes combines them into one form. Zoroaster also proclaims that Ahura Mazda is omniscient but not omnipotent. [14] Ahura Mazda existed in light and goodness above, while Angra Mainyu, (also referred to in later texts as "Ahriman"), [60] [61] the destructive spirit/mentality, existed in darkness and ignorance below. They have existed independently of each other for all time, and manifest contrary substances. In the Gathas, Ahura Mazda is noted as working through emanations known as the Amesha Spenta [62] and with the help of "other ahuras". [26] These divine beings called Amesha

Spentas, support him and are representative and guardians of different aspects of creation and the ideal personality.[62] Ahura Mazda is immanent in humankind and interacts with creation through these bounteous/holy divinities. In addition to these, He is assisted by a league of countless divinities called Yazatas, meaning "worthy of worship." Each Yazata is generally a hypostasis of a moral or physical aspect of creation. Asha[14][44] is the main spiritual force which comes from Ahura Mazda.[44] It is the cosmic order and is the antithesis of chaos, which is evident as druj, falsehood and disorder, that comes from Angra Mainyu.[46][32] The resulting cosmic conflict involves all of creation, mental/spiritual and material, including humanity at its core, which has an active role to play in the conflict.[63] The main representative of Asha in this conflict is Spenta Mainyu, the creative spirit/mentality.[60] Ahura Mazda then created the material and visible world itself in order to ensnare evil. He created the floating, egg-shaped universe in two parts: first the spiritual (menog) and 3,000 years later, the physical (getig).[45] Ahura Mazda then created Gayomard, the archetypical perfect man, and Gavaevodata, the primordial bovine.[51]

While Ahura Mazda created the universe and humankind, Angra Mainyu, whose very nature is to destroy, miscreated demons, evil daevas, and noxious creatures (khrafstar) such as snakes, ants, and flies. Angra Mainyu created an opposite, evil being for each good being, except for humans, which he found he could not match. Angra Mainyu invaded the universe through the base of the sky, inflicting Gayomard and the bull with suffering and death. However, the evil forces were trapped in the universe and could not retreat. The dying primordial man and bovine emitted seeds, which were protected by Mah, the Moon. From the bull's seed grew all beneficial plants and animals of the world and from the man's seed grew a plant whose leaves became the first human couple. Humans thus struggle in a two-fold universe of the material and spiritual trapped and in long combat with evil. The evils of this physical world are not products of an inherent weakness but are the fault of Angra Mainyu's assault on creation. This assault turned the perfectly flat, peaceful, and daily illuminated world into a mountainous, violent place that is half night.[51] According to Zoroastrian cosmology, in articulating the Ahuna Vairya formula, Ahura Mazda made the ultimate triumph of good against Angra Mainyu evident.[64] Ahura Mazda will ultimately prevail over the evil Angra Mainyu, at which point reality will undergo a cosmic renovation called Frashokereti[65] and limited time will end. In the final renovation, all of creation—even the souls of the dead that were initially banished to or chose to descend into "darkness"—will be reunited with Ahura Mazda in the Kshatra Vairya (meaning "best dominion"),[66] being resurrected to immortality.[citation needed]

Cosmography

Zoroastrian cosmography, which refers to the description of the structure of the cosmos in Zoroastrian literature and theology, involves a primary division of the cosmos into heaven and earth.[67] The heaven is composed of three parts: the lower-most part, which is where the fixed stars may be found; the middle part, where the domain of the moon is located, and the upper part, which is the domain of the sun and unreachable by Ahirman.[68] Further above the highest level of the heaven/sky includes regions

described as the Endless Lights, as well as the Thrones of Amahraspandān and Ohrmazd.[69] Although this is the basic framework which occurs in Avestan texts, later Zoroastrian literature would elaborate on this picture by further subdividing the lowest part of heaven to achieve a total of six or seven layers.[70] The Earth itself was described as possessing three primary mountains: Mount Hukairiia, whose peak was the focal point of the revolution of the star Sadwēs; Mount Haraitī, whose peak was the focal point of the revolution of the sun and the moon, and the greatest of them all, the Harā Bārēz whose peak was located at the center of the Earth and which was the first in a chain of 2,244 mountains which, together, encircled the Earth.[71] Although the planets are not described in early Zoroastrian sources, they entered Zoroastrian thought in the Middle Persian period: they were demonized and took on the names Anāhīd (Pahlavi for Venus), Tīr (Mercury), Wahrām (Mars), Ohrmazd (Jupiter), and Kēwān (Saturn).[72]

Eschatology

Main article: Frashokereti

Individual judgment at death is at the Chinvat Bridge ("bridge of judgement" or "bridge of choice"), which each human must cross, facing a spiritual judgment, though modern belief is split as to whether it is representative of a mental decision during life to choose between good and evil or an afterworld location. Humans' actions under their free will through choice determine the outcome. According to tradition, the soul is judged by the Yazatas Mithra, Sraosha, and Rashnu, where depending on the verdict one is either greeted at the bridge by a beautiful, sweet-smelling maiden or by an ugly, foul-smelling old hag representing their Daena affected by their actions in life. The maiden leads the dead safely across the bridge, which widens and becomes pleasant for the righteous, towards the House of Song. The hag leads the dead down a bridge that narrows to a razor's edge and is full of stench until the departed falls off into the abyss towards the House of Lies.[51][73] Those with a balance of good and evil go to Hamistagan, a purgatorial realm mentioned in the 9th century work *Dadestan-i Denig*. [74]

The House of Lies is considered temporary and reformatory; punishments fit the crimes, and souls do not rest in eternal damnation. Hell contains foul smells and evil food, a smothering darkness, and souls are packed tightly together although they believe they are in total isolation.[51]

In ancient Zoroastrian eschatology, a 3,000-year struggle between good and evil will be fought, punctuated by evil's final assault. During the final assault, the sun and moon will darken, and humankind will lose its reverence for religion, family, and elders. The world will fall into winter, and Angra Mainyu's most fearsome miscreant, Azi Dahaka, will break free and terrorize the world.[51]

According to legend, the final savior of the world, known as the Saoshyant, will be born to a virgin impregnated by the seed of Zoroaster while bathing in a lake. The Saoshyant will raise the dead—including those in all afterworlds—for final judgment, returning the wicked to hell to be purged of bodily sin. Next, all will wade through a river of molten

metal in which the righteous will not burn but through which the impure will be completely purified. The forces of good will ultimately triumph over evil, rendering it forever impotent but not destroyed. The Saoshyant and Ahura Mazda will offer a bull as a final sacrifice for all time and all humans will become immortal. Mountains will again flatten and valleys will rise; the House of Song will descend to the moon, and the earth will rise to meet them both.[51] Humanity will require two judgments because there are as many aspects to our being: spiritual (menog) and physical (getig).[51]

Practices and rituals

An 8th century Tang dynasty Chinese clay figurine of a Sogdian man wearing a distinctive cap and face veil, possibly a camel rider or even a Zoroastrian priest engaging in a ritual at a fire temple, since face veils were used to avoid contaminating the holy fire with breath or saliva; Museum of Oriental Art (Turin), Italy.[75] Throughout Zoroastrian history, shrines and temples have been the focus of worship and pilgrimage for adherents of the religion. Early Zoroastrians were recorded as worshipping in the 5th century BCE on mounds and hills where fires were lit below the open skies.[76] In the wake of Achaemenid expansion, shrines were constructed throughout the empire and particularly influenced the role of Mithra, Aredvi Sura Anahita, Verethragna and Tishtrya, alongside other traditional Yazata who all have hymns within the Avesta and also local deities and culture-heroes. Today, enclosed and covered fire temples tend to be the focus of community worship where fires of varying grades are maintained by the clergy assigned to the temples.[77]

The incorporation of cultural and local rituals is quite common and traditions have been passed down in historically Zoroastrian communities such as herbal healing practices, wedding ceremonies, and the like.[78][79][43] Traditionally, Zoroastrian rituals have also included shamanic elements involving mystical methods such as spirit travel to the invisible realm and involving the consumption of fortified wine, Haoma, mang, and other ritual aids.[80][45][81][82][83]

Ossuary with reliefs of Zoroastrian priests attending a fire, Mullakurgan (near Samarkand), Uzbekistan, 7–8th century CE.[84]

According to former South Asian studies professor Bettina Robotika, purification ceremonies associated with water (aban) and fire (atar) are considered the basis of Zoroastrian ritual life. Some Zoroastrian communities practice ritual exposure, mainly in regions of the Indian subcontinent where the practice is legal and there are healthy populations of scavenger birds. A corpse is considered a host for decay or druj, and scripture enjoins that it be disposed in a manner that does not pollute the good creation. Structures called Towers of Silence are commonly identified with this practice.[85]

The central ritual of Zoroastrianism is the Yasna, which is a recitation of the eponymous book of the Avesta and sacrificial ritual ceremony involving Haoma.[86] Extensions to the Yasna ritual are possible through use of the Visperad and Vendidad, but such an

extended ritual is rare in modern Zoroastrianism.[87][88] The Yasna itself descended from Indo-Iranian sacrificial ceremonies and animal sacrifice of varying degrees are mentioned in the Avesta and are still practiced in Zoroastrianism albeit through reduced forms such as the sacrifice of fat before meals.[89] High rituals such as the Yasna are considered to be the purview of the Mobads with a corpus of individual and communal rituals and prayers included in the Khordeh Avesta.[86][90]

A Zoroastrian is welcomed into the faith through the Navjote/Sedreh Pushi ceremony, which is traditionally conducted during the later childhood or pre-teen years of the aspirant, though there is no defined age limit for the ritual.[43][91] After the ceremony, Zoroastrians are encouraged to wear their sedreh (ritual shirt) and kushti (ritual girdle) daily as a spiritual reminder and for mystical protection, though reformist Zoroastrians tend to only wear them during festivals, ceremonies, and prayers.[92][43][91]

Historically, Zoroastrians are encouraged to pray the five daily Gāhs and to maintain and celebrate the various holy festivals of the Zoroastrian calendar, which can differ from community to community.[93][94] Zoroastrian prayers, called manthras, are conducted usually with hands outstretched in imitation of Zoroaster's prayer style described in the Gathas and are of a reflectionary and supplicant nature believed to be endowed with the ability to banish evil.[95][96][64] Devout Zoroastrians are known to cover their heads during prayer, either with traditional topi, scarves, other headwear, or even just their hands. However, full coverage and veiling which is traditional in Islamic practice is not a part of Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrian women in Iran wear their head coverings displaying hair and their faces to defy mandates by the Islamic Republic of Iran.[97]

Scripture

See also: Zoroastrian literature

Avesta

Main articles: Avesta and Avestan

The Avesta is a collection of the central religious texts of Zoroastrianism written in the old Iranian dialect of Avestan. The history of the Avesta is speculated upon in many Pahlavi texts with varying degrees of authority, with the current version of the Avesta dating at oldest from the times of the Sasanian Empire.[98] The Avesta was "composed at different times, providing a series of snapshots of the religion that allow historians to see how it changed over time".[99] According to Middle Persian tradition, Ahura Mazda created the 21 Nasks of the original Avesta which Zoroaster brought to Vishtaspa. Here, two copies were created, one which was put in the house of archives and the other put in the Imperial treasury. During Alexander's conquest of Persia, the Avesta (written on 1,200 ox-hides) was burned, and the scientific sections that the Greeks could use were dispersed among themselves. However, there is no strong historical evidence for this and they remain contested despite affirmations from the Zoroastrian tradition, whether it be the Denkart, Tansar-nāma, Ardāy Wirāz Nāmag, Bundahsin, Zand-i Wahman yasn or the transmitted oral tradition.[98][100]

As tradition continues, under the reign of King Valax (identified with a Vologases of the

Arsacid dynasty[101]), an attempt was made to restore what was considered the Avesta. During the Sassanid Empire, Ardeshir ordered Tansar, his high priest, to finish the work that King Valax had started. Shapur I sent priests to locate the scientific text portions of the Avesta that were in the possession of the Greeks.[102] Under Shapur II, Arderbad Mahrespandand revised the canon to ensure its orthodox character, while under Khosrow I, the Avesta was translated into Pahlavi.

The compilation of the Avesta can be authoritatively traced, however, to the Sasanian Empire, of which only fraction survive today if the Middle Persian literature is correct.[98] The later manuscripts all date from after the fall of the Sasanian Empire, the latest being from 1288, 590 years after the fall of the Sasanian Empire. The texts that remain today are the Gathas, Yasna, Visperad and the Vendidad, of which the latter's inclusion is disputed within the faith.[103] Along with these texts is the individual, communal, and ceremonial prayer book called the Khordeh Avesta, which contains the Yashts and other important hymns, prayers, and rituals. The rest of the materials from the Avesta are called "Avestan fragments" in that they are written in Avestan, incomplete, and generally of unknown provenance.[104]

Middle Persian (Pahlavi)

Middle Persian and Pahlavi works created in the 9th and 10th century contain many religious Zoroastrian books, as most of the writers and copyists were part of the Zoroastrian clergy. The most significant and important books of this era include the Denkard, Bundahishn, Menog-i Khrad, Selections of Zadspram, Jamasp Namag, Epistles of Manucher, Rivayats, Dadestan-i-Denig, and Arda Viraf Namag. All Middle Persian texts written on Zoroastrianism during this time period are considered secondary works on the religion, and not scripture.[citation needed]

History

Zoroaster

Main article: Zoroaster

Zoroastrianism was founded by Zoroaster in ancient Iran. The precise date of the founding of the religion is uncertain and estimates vary wildly from 2000 BCE to "200 years before Alexander". Zoroaster was born – in either Northeast Iran or Southwest Afghanistan – into a culture with a polytheistic religion, which featured excessive animal sacrifice[105] and the excessive ritual use of intoxicants. His life was influenced profoundly by the attempts of his people to find peace and stability in the face of constant threats of raiding and conflict. Zoroaster's birth and early life are little documented but speculated upon heavily in later texts. What is known is recorded in the Gathas, forming the core of the Avesta, which contain hymns thought to have been composed by Zoroaster himself. Born into the Spitama clan, he refers to himself as a poet-priest and prophet. He had a wife, three sons, and three daughters, the numbers of which are gathered from various texts.[106]

Zoroaster rejected many of the gods of the Bronze Age Iranians and their oppressive class structure, in which the Kavis and Karapans (princes and priests) controlled the

ordinary people. He also opposed cruel animal sacrifices and the excessive use of the possibly hallucinogenic Haoma plant (conjectured to have been a species of ephedra or *Peganum harmala*), but did not condemn either practice outright, providing moderation was observed.[89][107]

Legendary accounts

According to later Zoroastrian tradition, when Zoroaster was 30 years old, he went into the Daiti river to draw water for a Haoma ceremony; when he emerged, he received a vision of Vohu Manah. After this, Vohu Manah took him to the other six Amesha Spentas, where he received the completion of his vision.[108] This vision radically transformed his view of the world, and he tried to teach this view to others. Zoroaster believed in one supreme creator deity and acknowledged this creator's emanations (Amesha Spenta) and other divinities which he called Ahuras (Yazata).[31] Some of the deities of the old religion, the Daevas (etymologically similar to the Sanskrit Devas), appeared to delight in war and strife and were condemned as evil workers of Angra Mainyu by Zoroaster.[109]

Zoroaster's ideas were not taken up quickly; he originally only had one convert: his cousin Maidhyoimanha.[110]

Cypress of Kashmar

Main article: Cypress of Kashmar

The Cypress of Kashmar is a mythical cypress tree of legendary beauty and gargantuan dimensions. It is said to have sprung from a branch brought by Zoroaster from Paradise and to have stood in today's Kashmar in northeastern Iran and to have been planted by Zoroaster in honor of the conversion of King Vishtaspa to Zoroastrianism. According to the Iranian physicist and historian Zakariya al-Qazwini King Vishtaspa had been a patron of Zoroaster who planted the tree himself. In his *ʿAjā'ib al-makhlūqāt wa gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt*, he further describes how the Abbasid caliph Al-Mutawakkil in 247 AH (861 CE) caused the mighty cypress to be felled, and then transported it across Iran, to be used for beams in his new palace at Samarra. Before, he wanted the tree to be reconstructed before his eyes. This was done in spite of protests by the Iranians, who offered a very great sum of money to save the tree. Al-Mutawakkil never saw the cypress, because he was murdered by a Turkish soldier (possibly in the employ of his son) on the night when it arrived on the banks of the Tigris.[111][112]

Fire Temple of Kashmar

Kashmar Fire Temple was the first Zoroastrian fire temple built by Vishtaspa at the request of Zoroaster in Kashmar. In a part of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, the story of finding Zarathustra and accepting Vishtaspa's religion is regulated that after accepting Zoroastrian religion, Vishtaspa sends priests all over the universe And Azar enters the fire temples (domes) and the first of them is Adur Burzen-Mihr who founded in Kashmar and planted a cypress tree in front of the fire temple and made it a symbol of accepting the Bahi religion And he sent priests all over the world, and commanded all the famous men and women to come to that place of worship.[113]

According to the Paikuli inscription, during the Sasanian Empire, Kashmar was part of Greater Khorasan, and the Sasanians worked hard to revive the ancient religion. It still remains a few kilometers above the ancient city of Kashmar in the castle complex of Atashgah.[114]

Early history

See also: Avestan period and Airyanem Vaejah

Geographical horizon of the Avestan people during the Young Avestan period. Sources for the different localizations are in the file description.

The roots of Zoroastrianism are thought to lie in a common prehistoric Indo-Iranian religious system dating back to the early 2nd millennium BCE.[115] The prophet Zoroaster himself, though traditionally dated to the 6th century BCE,[116][13][117] is thought by many modern historians to have been a reformer of the polytheistic Iranian religion who lived much earlier during the second half of the second millennium BCE. [118][119][120][121] Zoroastrian tradition names Airyanem Vaejah as the home of Zarathustra and the birthplace of the religion. No consensus exists as to the localization of Airyanem Vaejah, but the region of Khwarezm has been considered by modern scholars as a candidate.[122] Zoroastrianism as a religion was not firmly established until centuries later during the Young Avestan period. At this time, the Zoroastrian community was concentrated in the eastern portion of Greater Iran.[123] Although no consensus exists on the chronology of the Avestan period, the lack of any discernable Persian and Median influence in the Avesta makes a time frame in the first half of the first millennium BCE likely.[124]

Classical antiquity

See also: Western references to Zoroaster and Zoroastrianism and Religion in the Achaemenid Empire

Painted clay and alabaster head of a Zoroastrian priest wearing a distinctive Bactrian-style headdress, Takhti-Sangin, Tajikistan, Greco-Bactrian kingdom, 3rd–2nd century BCE.[125]

The Tomb of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae, Iran

Zoroastrianism enters recorded history in the mid-5th century BCE. Herodotus' *The Histories* (completed c. 440 BCE) includes a description of Greater Iranian society with what may be recognizably Zoroastrian features, including exposure of the dead.[126]

The Histories is a primary source of information on the early period of the Achaemenid era (648–330 BCE), in particular with respect to the role of the Magi. According to Herodotus, the Magi were the sixth tribe of the Medes (until the unification of the Persian empire under Cyrus the Great, all Iranians were referred to as "Mede" or "Mada" by the peoples of the Ancient World) and wielded considerable influence at the courts of the Median emperors.[127]

Following the unification of the Median and Persian empires in 550 BCE, Cyrus the Great and later his son Cambyses II curtailed the powers of the Magi after they had attempted to sow dissent following their loss of influence. In 522 BCE, the Magi revolted and set up a rival claimant to the throne. The usurper, pretending to be Cyrus' younger son Smerdis, took power shortly thereafter.[128] Owing to the despotic rule of Cambyses and his long absence in Egypt, "the whole people, Persians, Medes and all the other nations" acknowledged the usurper, especially as he granted a remission of taxes for three years.[127]

Darius I and later Achaemenid emperors acknowledged their devotion to Ahura Mazda in inscriptions, as attested to several times in the Behistun inscription and appear to have continued the model of coexistence with other religions. Whether Darius was a follower of the teachings of Zoroaster has not been conclusively established as there is no indication of note that worship of Ahura Mazda was exclusively a Zoroastrian practice.[129]

According to later Zoroastrian legend (Denkard and the Book of Arda Viraf), many sacred texts were lost when Alexander the Great's troops invaded Persepolis and subsequently destroyed the royal library there. Diodorus Siculus's *Bibliotheca historica*, which was completed c. 60 BCE, appears to substantiate this Zoroastrian legend.[130] According to one archaeological examination, the ruins of the palace of Xerxes I bear traces of having been burned.[131] Whether a vast collection of (semi-)religious texts "written on parchment in gold ink", as suggested by the Denkard, actually existed remains a matter of speculation.[132]

Alexander's conquests largely displaced Zoroastrianism with Hellenistic beliefs,[121] though the religion continued to be practiced many centuries following the demise of the Achaemenids in mainland Persia and the core regions of the former Achaemenid Empire, most notably Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and the Caucasus. In the Cappadocian kingdom, whose territory was formerly an Achaemenid possession, Persian colonists, cut off from their co-religionists in Iran proper, continued to practice the faith [Zoroastrianism] of their forefathers; and there Strabo, observing in the first century BCE, records (XV.3.15) that these "fire kindlers" possessed many "holy places of the Persian Gods", as well as fire temples.[133] Strabo further states that these were "noteworthy enclosures; and in their midst there is an altar, on which there is a large quantity of ashes and where the magi keep the fire ever burning." [133] It was not until the end of the Parthian Empire (247 BCE – 224 CE) that Zoroastrianism would receive renewed interest.[121]

Late antiquity

See also: Religion in the Parthian era

A Zoroastrian ossuary, 7–8th century CE, Hirman Tepe, Uzbekistan.[134]

As late as the Parthian period, a form of Zoroastrianism was without a doubt the

dominant religion in the Armenian lands.[135] The Sassanids aggressively promoted the Zurvanite form of Zoroastrianism, often building fire temples in captured territories to promote the religion. During the period of their centuries-long suzerainty over the Caucasus, the Sassanids made attempts to promote Zoroastrianism there with considerable successes.[citation needed]

Due to its ties to the Christian Roman Empire, Persia's archrival since Parthian times, the Sassanids were suspicious of Roman Christianity, and after the reign of Constantine the Great, sometimes persecuted it.[136] In 451 CE, the Sassanid authority clashed with their Armenian subjects in the Battle of Avarayr, making them officially break with the Roman Church. But the Sassanids tolerated or even sometimes favored the Christianity of the Church of the East. The acceptance of Christianity in Georgia (Caucasian Iberia) saw the Zoroastrian religion there slowly but surely decline,[137] but as late the 5th century CE, it was still widely practised as something like a second established religion. [138][139]

Decline in the Middle Ages

See also: Persecution of Zoroastrians

A scene from the Hamzanama where Hamza ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib Burns Zarhust's Chest and Shatters the Urn with his Ashes

Over the course of 22 years during the 7th century, most of the Sasanian Empire was conquered by the emerging Muslim caliphate.[140] Although the administration of the state was rapidly Islamicized and subsumed under the Umayyad Caliphate, in the beginning "there was little serious pressure" exerted on newly subjected people to adopt Islam.[141] Because of their sheer numbers, the conquered Zoroastrians had to be treated as dhimmis (despite doubts of the validity of this identification that persisted down the centuries),[142] which made them eligible for protection. Islamic jurists took the stance that only Muslims could be perfectly moral, but "unbelievers might as well be left to their iniquities, so long as these did not vex their overlords." [142] In the main, once the conquest was over and "local terms were agreed on", the Arab governors protected the local populations in exchange for tribute.[142]

The Arabs adopted the Sasanian tax-system, both the land-tax levied on landowners and the poll-tax levied on individuals,[142] called jizya, a tax levied on non-Muslims (i.e., the dhimmis). In time, this poll-tax came to be used as a means to humble the non-Muslims, and a number of laws and restrictions evolved to emphasize their inferior status. Under the early orthodox caliphs, as long as the non-Muslims paid their taxes and adhered to the dhimmi laws, administrators were enjoined to leave non-Muslims "in their religion and their land".[143]

Under Abbasid rule, Muslim Iranians (who by then were in the majority) in many instances showed severe disregard for and mistreated local Zoroastrians. For example, in the 9th century, a deeply venerated cypress tree in Khorasan (which Parthian-era legend supposed had been planted by Zoroaster himself) was felled for the construction

of a palace in Baghdad, 2,000 miles (3,200 km) away. In the 10th century, on the day that a Tower of Silence had been completed at much trouble and expense, a Muslim official contrived to get up onto it, and to call the adhan (the Muslim call to prayer) from its walls. This was turned into a pretext to annex the building.[144]

Ultimately, Muslim scholars like Al-Biruni found few records left of the belief of for instance the Khawarizmians because figures like Qutayba ibn Muslim "extinguished and ruined in every possible way all those who knew how to write and read the Khawarizmi writing, who knew the history of the country and who studied their sciences." As a result, "these things are involved in so much obscurity that it is impossible to obtain an accurate knowledge of the history of the country since the time of Islam..."[145]

Conversion

Though subject to a new leadership and harassment, the Zoroastrians were able to continue their former ways, although there was a slow but steady social and economic pressure to convert,[146][147] with the nobility and city-dwellers being the first to do so, while Islam was accepted more slowly among the peasantry and landed gentry.[148] "Power and worldly-advantage" now lay with followers of Islam, and although the "official policy was one of aloof contempt, there were individual Muslims eager to proselytize and ready to use all sorts of means to do so." [147]

In time, a tradition evolved by which Islam was made to appear as a partly Iranian religion. One example of this was a legend that Husayn, son of the fourth caliph Ali and grandson of Islam's prophet Muhammad, had married a captive Sassanid princess named Shahrbanu. This "wholly fictitious figure"[149] was said to have borne Husayn a son, the historical fourth Shi'a imam, who insisted that the caliphate rightly belonged to him and his descendants, and that the Umayyads had wrongfully wrested it from him. The alleged descent from the Sassanid house counterbalanced the Arab nationalism of the Umayyads, and the Iranian national association with a Zoroastrian past was disarmed. Thus, according to scholar Mary Boyce, "it was no longer the Zoroastrians alone who stood for patriotism and loyalty to the past." [149] The "damning indictment" that becoming Muslim was un-Iranian only remained an idiom in Zoroastrian texts.[149]

With Iranian support, the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyads in 750, and in the subsequent caliphate government—that nominally lasted until 1258—Muslim Iranians received marked favor in the new government, both in Iran and at the capital in Baghdad. This mitigated the antagonism between Arabs and Iranians but sharpened the distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Abbasids zealously persecuted heretics, and although this was directed mainly at Muslim sectarians, it also created a harsher climate for non-Muslims.[150]

Survival

The fire temple of Baku, c. 1860

Despite economic and social incentives to convert, Zoroastrianism remained strong in

some regions, particularly in those furthest away from the Caliphate capital at Baghdad. In Bukhara (present-day Uzbekistan), resistance to Islam required the 9th-century Arab commander Qutaiba to convert his province four times. The first three times the citizens reverted to their old religion. Finally, the governor made their religion "difficult for them in every way", turned the local fire temple into a mosque, and encouraged the local population to attend Friday prayers by paying each attendee two dirhams.[147] The cities where Arab governors resided were particularly vulnerable to such pressures, and in these cases the Zoroastrians were left with no choice but to either conform or migrate to regions that had a more amicable administration.[147]

The 9th century came to define the great number of Zoroastrian texts that were composed or re-written during the 8th to 10th centuries (excluding copying and lesser amendments, which continued for some time thereafter). All of these works are in the Middle Persian dialect of that period (free of Arabic words) and written in the difficult Pahlavi script (hence the adoption of the term "Pahlavi" as the name of the variant of the language, and of the genre, of those Zoroastrian books). If read aloud, these books would still have been intelligible to the laity. Many of these texts are responses to the tribulations of the time, and all of them include exhortations to stand fast in their religious beliefs.[citation needed]

Fire Temple of Yazd

Museum of Zoroastrians in Kerman

In Khorasan in northeastern Iran, a 10th-century Iranian nobleman brought together four Zoroastrian priests to transcribe a Sassanid-era Middle Persian work titled Book of the Lord (Khwaday Namag) from Pahlavi script into Arabic script. This transcription, which remained in Middle Persian prose (an Arabic version, by al-Muqaffa, also exists), was completed in 957 and subsequently became the basis for Firdausi's Book of Kings. It became enormously popular among both Zoroastrians and Muslims, and also served to propagate the Sassanid justification for overthrowing the Arsacids.[citation needed]

Among migrations were those to cities in (or on the margins of) the great salt deserts, in particular to Yazd and Kerman, which remain centers of Iranian Zoroastrianism to this day. Yazd became the seat of the Iranian high priests during Mongol Ilkhanate rule, when the "best hope for survival [for a non-Muslim] was to be inconspicuous." [151] Crucial to the present-day survival of Zoroastrianism was a migration from the northeastern Iranian town of "Sanjan in south-western Khorasan", [152] to Gujarat, in western India. The descendants of that group are today known as the Parsis—"as the Gujaratis, from long tradition, called anyone from Iran" [152]—who today represent the larger of the two groups of Zoroastrians in India. [153]

A special container carrying the holy fire from Aden to the Lonavala Agiary, India
The struggle between Zoroastrianism and Islam declined in the 10th and 11th centuries.

Local Iranian dynasties, "all vigorously Muslim,"[152] had emerged as largely independent vassals of the Caliphs. In the 16th century, in one of the early letters between Iranian Zoroastrians and their co-religionists in India, the priests of Yazd lamented that "no period [in human history], not even that of Alexander, had been more grievous or troublesome for the faithful than 'this millennium of the demon of Wrath'." [154]

Modern

Further information: Parsis, Irani (India), Zoroastrianism in Iran, and Zoroastrianism in India

A modern Zoroastrian fire temple in Western India

Sadeh in Tehran, 2011

Zoroastrianism has survived into the modern period, particularly in India, where the Parsis are thought to have been present since about the 9th century.[155]

Today Zoroastrianism can be divided in two main schools of thought: reformists and traditionalists. Traditionalists are mostly Parsis and accept, beside the Gathas and Avesta, also the Middle Persian literature and like the reformists mostly developed in their modern form from 19th century developments. They generally do not allow conversion to the faith and, as such, for someone to be a Zoroastrian they must be born of Zoroastrian parents. Some traditionalists recognize the children of mixed marriages as Zoroastrians, though usually only if the father is a born Zoroastrian.[156] Not all Zoroastrians identify with either school. Notable examples gaining traction include Neo-Zoroastrians/Revivalists, which are usually reinterpretations of Zoroastrianism appealing towards Western concerns,[157] and centering the idea of Zoroastrianism as a living religion. These advocate the revival and maintenance of old rituals and prayers while supporting ethical and social progressive reforms. Both of these latter schools tend to center the Gathas without outright rejecting other texts except the Vendidad.[158]

From the 19th century onward, the Parsis gained a reputation for their education and widespread influence in all aspects of society. They played an instrumental role in the economic development of the region over many decades; several of the best-known business conglomerates of India are run by Parsi-Zoroastrians, including the Tata,[159] Godrej, Wadia families, and others.[160]

For a variety of social and political factors, the Zoroastrians of the Indian subcontinent, namely the Parsis and Iranis, have not engaged in conversion since at least the 18th century. Zoroastrian high priests have historically opined there is no reason to not allow conversion, which is also supported by the Revayats and other scripture, though later priests have condemned these judgements.[161][26] Within Iran, many of the beleaguered Zoroastrians have been also historically opposed or not practically concerned with the matter of conversion. Currently though, The Council of Tehran Mobeds (the highest ecclesiastical authority within Iran) endorses conversion but

conversion from Islam to Zoroastrianism is illegal under the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran.[156][26]

Though the Armenians share a rich history affiliated with Zoroastrianism (that eventually declined with the advent of Christianity), reports indicate that there were Zoroastrians in Armenia until the 1920s.[162]

At the request of the government of Tajikistan, UNESCO declared 2003 a year to celebrate the "3,000th anniversary of Zoroastrian culture", with special events throughout the world. In 2011, the Tehran Mobeds Anjuman announced that for the first time in the history of modern Iran and of the modern Zoroastrian communities worldwide, women had been ordained in Iran and North America as mobedyars, meaning women assistant mobeds (Zoroastrian clergy).[163][164][165] The women hold official certificates and can perform the lower-rung religious functions and can initiate people into the religion.[166][167]

The current Zoroastrian population is said be around 100,000 to 200,000 and reportedly declining.[168] However, further studies are needed to confirm this, as numbers have also been rising in some areas, such as Iran.[169][170][171]

Demographics

Further information: List of countries by Zoroastrian population and List of Zoroastrians

The sacred Zoroastrian pilgrimage shrine of Chak Chak in Yazd, Iran
Zoroastrian communities internationally tend to comprise mostly two main groups of people: Indian Parsis and Iranian Zoroastrians. According to a study in 2012 by the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America, the number of Zoroastrians worldwide was estimated to be between 111,691 and 121,962. The number is imprecise because of diverging counts in Iran.[167]

Iran, Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Central Asia

Main article: Zoroastrians in Iran

Parsi Navjote ceremony (rites of admission into the Zoroastrian faith)

Iran's figures of Zoroastrians have ranged widely; the last census (1974) before the revolution of 1979 revealed 21,400 Zoroastrians.[172] Some 10,000 adherents remain in the Central Asian regions that were once considered the traditional stronghold of Zoroastrianism, i.e., Bactria (see also Balkh), which is in Northern Afghanistan; Sogdiana; Margiana; and other areas close to Zoroaster's homeland. In Iran, emigration, out-marriage and low birth rates are likewise leading to a decline in the Zoroastrian population. Zoroastrian groups in Iran say their number is approximately 60,000.[173] According to the Iranian census data from 2011 the number of Zoroastrians in Iran was 25,271.[174]

Communities exist in Tehran, as well as in Yazd, Kerman and Kermanshah, where many

still speak an Iranian language distinct from the usual Persian. They call their language Dari, not to be confused with the Dari spoken in Afghanistan. Their language is also called Gavri or Behdini, literally "of the Good Religion". Sometimes their language is named for the cities in which it is spoken, such as Yazdi or Kermani. Iranian Zoroastrians were historically called Gabrs.[175]

The number of Kurdish Zoroastrians, along with those of non-ethnic converts, has been estimated differently.[176] The Zoroastrian Representative of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq has reported that as many as 100,000 people in Iraqi Kurdistan have converted to Zoroastrianism recently, with some community leaders speculating that even more Zoroastrians in the region are practicing their faith secretly.[177][178] [179] However, this has not been confirmed by independent sources.[180] While, 2024 estimates showed a smaller figure of nearly 5,000 living in the region, primarily in Sulaymaniya Governorate of Iraq.[181]

The surge in Kurdish Muslims converting to Zoroastrianism is largely attributed to disillusionment with Islam after experiencing violence and oppression perpetrated by ISIS in the area.[182]

South Asia

Main articles: Parsis and Irani (India)

Historical population of Parsis in India

Year	Pop.	±% p.a.
1872	69,476	—
1881	85,397	+2.32%
1891	89,904	+0.52%
1901	94,190	+0.47%
1911	100,096	+0.61%
1921	101,778	+0.17%
1931	109,752	+0.76%
1941	114,890	+0.46%
1971	91,266	−0.76%
1981	71,630	−2.39%
2001	69,601	−0.14%
2011	57,264	−1.93%
2019	69,000	+2.36%

Sources:[183][184][185][186][187][188][189][190][191][192][193][194]

India is considered to be home to a large Zoroastrian population – the descendants of migrants from Iran and today known as the Parsis. In India's 2001 census, the Parsi population numbered at 69,601, representing about 0.006% of the total population of India, with a concentration in and around the city of Mumbai. By 2008, the birth-to-death ratio was 1:5; 200 births per year to 1,000 deaths.[195] India's 2011 census recorded 57,264 Parsi Zoroastrians.[193]

The Zoroastrian population in Pakistan was estimated to number 1,675 people in 2012,

[167] mostly living in Sindh (especially Karachi) followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.[196]
[197] The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) of Pakistan reported that there were 3,650 Parsi voters during the elections in Pakistan in 2013 and 4,235 in 2018.[198] According to the 2023 Pakistani census, there were 2,348 Parsis across the nation, with 1,656 (70.5%) being located in the Karachi Division.[199][200]

Western world

See also: Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America and Zoroastrianism in the United States

North America is thought to be home to 18,000–25,000 Zoroastrians of both South Asian and Iranian backgrounds. As of 2012, the population of Zoroastrians in US was 15,000, making it the third-largest Zoroastrian population in the world after those of India and Iran.[201] According to the 2021 Canadian census, the Zoroastrian Canadian population stood at 7,285, of which 3,630 were Parsis (of South Asian descent) and a further 2,390 of West Asian origin.[202] A further 3,500 live in Australia (mainly in Sydney). Stewart, Hinze & Williams write that 3,000 Kurds have converted to Zoroastrianism in Sweden.[203] According to the 2021 UK census, there were 4,105 Zoroastrians in England and Wales, of which 4,043 were in England. The majority (51%) of these (2,050) were in London, most notably the boroughs of Barnet, Harrow and Westminster. The remaining 49% of English Zoroastrians were scattered relatively evenly throughout the country, with the second and third largest concentrations being Birmingham (72) and Manchester (47).[204] In 2020, Historic England published A Survey of Zoroastrianism Buildings in England with the aim of providing information about buildings that Zoroastrians use in England so that HE can work with communities to enhance and protect those buildings now and in the future. The scoping survey identified four buildings in England.[205]

Relation to other religions and cultures

Map of the Achaemenid Empire in the 5th century BCE

Indo-Iranian origins

See also: Indo-Iranians and Proto-Indo-Iranian religion

The religion of Zoroastrianism is closest to historical Vedic religion to varying degrees. [clarification needed] Some historians believe that Zoroastrianism, along with similar philosophical revolutions in South Asia were interconnected strings of reformation of a common Indo-Aryan thread. Many traits of Zoroastrianism can be traced to prehistoric Indo-Iranian culture and beliefs, that is, before the migrations that separated the Indo-Aryans and Iranic peoples. Thus, Zoroastrianism shares elements with the historical Vedic religion that also originated in that era. Some examples include cognates between the Avestan word Ahura ("Ahura Mazda") and the Vedic Sanskrit word Asura ('demon', 'evil demigod'); as well as daeva ("demon") and deva ("god") and they both descend from a common Proto-Indo-Iranian religion.[citation needed]

Zoroastrianism inherited ideas from other belief systems and, like other "practiced" religions, contains syncretism.[206] Specifically, Zoroastrianism in Sogdia, the Kushan

Empire, Armenia, China, and other places incorporates local and foreign practices and deities.[207]

Conversely, Zoroastrian influenced Hungarian, Slavic, Ossetian, Turkic and Mongol mythologies, all of which bear extensive light-dark dualisms and possible sun god theonyms related to Hvare-khshaeta.[208][209][210]

Abrahamic religions

Zoroastrianism is sometimes credited with being the first monotheistic religion in history, [21] antedating that of the Israelites and leaving a lasting and profound imprint on Second Temple Judaism and, through it, on later monotheistic religions such as early Christianity and Islam.[25][211] There are clear commonalities and similarities between Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity, such as: monotheism, dualism (i.e., a robust notion of a Devil—but with a positive appraisal of material creation), symbolism of the divine, heaven(s) and hell(s), angels and demons, eschatology and final judgment, a messianic figure and the idea of a savior, a holy spirit, concern with ritual purity, an idealization of wisdom and righteousness, and other doctrines, symbols, practices, and religious features.[212]

According to Mary Boyce, "Zoroaster was thus the first to teach the doctrines of an individual judgement, Heaven and Hell, the future resurrection of the body, the general last judgement, and life everlasting for the reunited soul and body. These doctrines were to become familiar articles of faith to much of mankind, through borrowing by Judaism, Christianity and Islam; yet it is in Zoroastrianism itself that they have their fullest logical coherence. Since Zoroaster insisted both on the goodness of material creation, and hence of the physical body, and on the unwavering impartiality of divine justice." [213]

The interactions between Judaism and Zoroastrianism resulted in transfer of religious ideas between the two religions and as a result, it is believed that Jews under Achaemenid rule were influenced by Zoroastrian angelology, demonology, eschatology, as well as Zoroastrian ideas about compensatory justice in life and after death.[214] It is also postulated that the Jewish high monotheistic concept of God developed during and after the period of the Babylonian captivity, when the Jews had a prolonged exposure to sophisticated Zoroastrian beliefs.[215]

In addition, Zoroastrian concepts seeded dualistic ideas in Jewish eschatology, such as the belief in a savior, the final battle between good and evil, the triumph of good and the resurrection of the dead. These ideas later passed on to Christianity via Zoroastrian-inspired texts of the Old Testament.[216]

According to some sources, such as The Jewish Encyclopedia (1906),[217] there exist many similarities between Zoroastrianism and Judaism. This has led some to propose that key Zoroastrian concepts influenced Judaism. However, other scholars disagree, finding that the general social influence of Zoroastrianism was much more limited, and that no link can be found in Jewish or Christian texts.[218]

Proponents of a link cite similarities between the two: such as dualism (good and evil, divine twins Ahura Mazda "God" and Angra Mainyu "Satan"), image of the deity, eschatology, resurrection and final judgment, messianism, revelation of Zoroaster on a mountain with Moses on Mount Sinai, three sons of Fereydun with three sons of Noah, heaven and hell, angelology and demonology, cosmology of six days or periods of creation, and free will, among others. Other scholars diminish or reject such influences, [219][220][217][221][222][218] noting that "Zoroastrianism has a unique theistic doctrine which combines dualism, polytheism and pantheism", rather than being a monotheistic religion.[218] Others say "there is little concrete evidence about the precise origin and development of" Zoroastrianism,[223] and that "Zoroastrianism does not compare with the Jewish belief in the sovereignty of God over the whole of creation." [224]

Others, such as Lester L. Grabbe, have said "there is general agreement that Persian religion and tradition had its influence on Judaism over the centuries" and the "question is where this influence was and which of the developments in Judaism can be ascribed to the Iranian side as opposed to the effect of the Greek or other cultures".[220] There exist distinctions but also similarities between Zoroastrian and Jewish law regarding marriage and procreation.[225] While Mary Boyce claims, besides Abrahamic religions, Zoroastrian influence also extended to Northern Buddhism.[226]

Islam

Zoroastrians are considered to be a "People of the Book" by Muslims.[227]

Manichaeism

Zoroastrianism is often compared with Manichaeism. Nominally an Iranian religion, Manichaeism was heavily inspired by Zoroastrianism[228] because of Mani's Iranian origin, and it was also rooted in prior Middle-Eastern Gnostic beliefs.[219][226][220]

Manichaeism adopted many of the Yazatas for its own pantheon[229] Gherardo Gnoli, in The Encyclopaedia of Religion,[230] says that "we can assert that Manichaeism has its roots in the Iranian religious tradition and that its relationship to Mazdaism, or Zoroastrianism, is more or less like that of Christianity to Judaism".[231]

The two religions have substantial differences.[232]

Present-day Iran

Many aspects of Zoroastrianism are present in the culture and mythologies of the peoples of Greater Iran, not least because Zoroastrianism was a dominant influence on the people of the cultural continent for a thousand years. Even after the rise of Islam and the loss of direct influence, Zoroastrianism remained part of the cultural heritage of the Iranian language-speaking world, in part as festivals and customs, but also because Ferdowsi incorporated a number of the figures and stories from the Avesta in his epic Shāhnāme, which is pivotal to Iranian identity. One notable example is the incorporation of the Yazata Sraosha as an angel venerated within Shia Islam in Iran.[233]

Mandaean cosmology
Proto-Indo-European mythology
Zurvan

Persian: دین زرتشتی Dīn-e Zartoshtī
Avestan: 𐬀𐬢𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬌𐬌𐬀𐬭𐬀𐬎𐬀 Mazdaīasna
Persian: بهدین behdīn

Boyd, James W.; Crosby, Donald A. (1979). "Is Zoroastrianism Dualistic or Monotheistic?". *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*. 47 (4): 557–88. doi:10.1093/jaarel/XLVII.4.557. ISSN 0002-7189. JSTOR 1462275. In brief, the interpretation we favor is that Zoroastrianism combines cosmogonic dualism and eschatological monotheism in a manner unique to itself among the major religions of the world. This combination results in a religious outlook which cannot be categorized as either straightforward dualism or straightforward monotheism, meaning that the question in the title of this paper poses a false dichotomy. The dichotomy arises, we contend, from a failure to take seriously enough the central role played by time in Zoroastrian theology. Zoroastrianism proclaims a movement through time from dualism toward monotheism, i.e., a dualism which is being made false by the dynamics of time, and a monotheism which is being made true by those same dynamics of time. The meaning of the eschaton in Zoroastrianism is thus the triumph of monotheism, the good God Ahura Mazdā having at last won his way through to complete and final ascendancy. But in the meantime there is vital truth to dualism, the neglect of which can only lead to a distortion of the religion's essential teachings.

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Druze mysticism is a secretive, esoteric spiritual path rooted in Islamic theology but blending Greek philosophy, Gnosticism, and Eastern thought, focused on Tawhid (oneness of God), inner truth, and cyclical reincarnation, with spiritual knowledge restricted to an initiated elite (al-Uqqal) while most members (al-Juhhal) live secular lives, emphasizing self-discipline and a unique path to divine unity beyond external rituals like prayer or fasting.

Core Beliefs & Concepts

Unitarian Monotheism (Tawhid): The central tenet is the absolute oneness of God, who is transcendent yet immanent, requiring mystical union rather than external worship.

Reincarnation (Tanāsukh): Souls are reborn immediately into other Druze bodies, creating a closed cycle, which encourages moral living.

Esoteric Knowledge: The faith is veiled, with sacred texts (like the Epistles of Wisdom) and deeper meanings accessible only to the initiated, known as the 'Wise' (al-Uqqal).

Spiritual Hierarchy: A spiritual elite (al-Uqqal) guides the community, while the majority (al-Juhhal) live worldly lives without deep religious commitment.

Divine Mind & Creation: Beliefs include a divine Mind (Aql) and Soul (Nafs) as creative forces, sometimes paralleling modern multiverse concepts.

Practices & Lifestyle

Non-Ritualistic: They reject formal prayer, fasting (like Ramadan), pilgrimage (Hajj), and mosque attendance, focusing on inner spirituality.

Truthfulness & Virtue: Emphasis is placed on ethical conduct, truth in speech, and self-discipline as paths to spiritual growth.

Secrecy & Community: The faith is closed to converts (born into it), fostering strong communal bonds and protecting esoteric teachings from outsiders.

Origins & Influences

Emerging from 11th-century Isma'ili Islam, Druze theology synthesized elements from Gnosticism, Greek philosophy (Plato, Aristotle), Judaism, Christianity, and Eastern mysticism, forming a unique esoteric system.

In essence, Druze mysticism is a journey of the soul towards understanding God's unity, achieved through self-purification and wisdom, rather than strict religious performance, making it more akin to a mystical philosophy than a conventional religion.

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Not to be confused with Druse.

Druze

Al-Muwahḥidūn

الموحدون

Druze star and Druze flag

Total population

800,000[1][2][3]–2,000,000[4]

Founder

Hamza ibn Ali ibn Ahmad[5]

Regions with significant populations

Syria 624,000 (pre-2011)[6][7]

Lebanon 250,000[8]

Israel[a] 119,000[9]

Venezuela 60,000[10][11]

United States 50,000[12][11]

Canada 25,000[13]

Jordan 20,000[14]

Germany 10,000[15]

Australia 4,268[16]

Religions

Druze

Scriptures

Epistles of Wisdom

(Rasā'il al-Ḥikma)

Languages

Levantine Arabic

Hebrew (L2)[17][18]

Druze faith

The Shrine of Shu'ayb near Hittin in the Galilee, Israel

Type Ethnic religion, esoteric religion

Classification Abrahamic

Scripture Epistles of Wisdom

Theology Monotheistic

Region Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, and diaspora

Language Classical Arabic

Headquarters Khalwat al-Bayada
 Territory Jabal al-Druze, Wadi al-Taym
 Founder Hamza ibn Ali[19]
 Origin Between 1017 and 1018 CE
 Cairo, Fatimid Caliphate[20]
 Separated from Islam (Isma'ilism)[21]
 Number of followers c. 800,000 – 2,000,000[22] (referred to as al-Muwaḥḥidūn al-Druze)
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 Hamza ibn AliAl-Darazi
 Baha al-Din al-MuqtanaAl-Tanukhi
 Texts
 Epistles of Wisdom (Rasa'il al-Hikma)
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 Mount DruzeShrine of Shu'ayb
 Khalwat
 Holy days
 Eid al-AdhaZiyara
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 1585 Ottoman expedition against the Druze
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 Battle of Ain Dara1838 Druze Revolt
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 The Druze,[b] who call themselves al-Muwaḥḥidūn (lit. 'the monotheists' or 'the
 unitarians'),[23] are an Arab esoteric religious group[24][25][26] from West Asia who

adhere to the Druze faith, an Abrahamic, monotheistic, and syncretic religion whose main tenets assert the unity of God, reincarnation, and the eternity of the soul.[27][28]

Although the Druze faith developed from Isma'ilism, Druze do not identify as Muslims.[29][21][30] They maintain the Arabic language and culture as integral parts of their identity,[31][32][18] with Arabic being their primary language.[33] Most Druze religious practices are kept secret,[34] and conversion to their religion is not permitted for outsiders.[35] Interfaith marriages are rare and strongly discouraged. They differentiate between spiritual individuals, known as "uqqāl", who hold the faith's secrets, and secular ones, known as "juhhāl", who focus on worldly matters.[36] Druze believe that, after completing the cycle of rebirth through successive reincarnations, the soul reunites with the Cosmic Mind (al-ʿaql al-kullī).

The Epistles of Wisdom is the foundational and central text of the Druze faith.[37] The Druze faith originated in Isma'ilism (a branch of Shia Islam),[38] and has been influenced by a diverse range of traditions, including Christianity,[39][40][41] Gnosticism, Neoplatonism,[39][40] Zoroastrianism,[42][43] Manichaeism,[44][45] and Pythagoreanism.[46][47][page needed] This has led to the development of a distinct and secretive theology, characterized by an esoteric interpretation of scripture that emphasizes the importance of the mind and truthfulness.[23][47] Druze beliefs include the concepts of theophany and reincarnation.[48]

The Druze hold Shuaib in high regard, believing him to be the same person as the biblical Jethro.[49] They regard Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and the Isma'ili Imam Muhammad ibn Isma'il as prophets.[50] Additionally, Druze tradition honors figures such as Salman the Persian,[51] al-Khidr (whom they identify with Elijah, John the Baptist and Saint George),[52] Job, Luke the Evangelist, and others as "mentors" and "prophets".[53]

The Druze faith is one of the major religious groups in the Levant, with between 800,000 and a million adherents. They are primarily located in Lebanon, Syria, and Israel, with smaller communities in Jordan. They make up 5.5% of Lebanon's population, 3% of Syria's and 1.6% of Israel's. The oldest and most densely populated Druze communities exist in Mount Lebanon and in the south of Syria around Jabal al-Druze (literally the "Mountain of the Druze").[54] The Druze community played a critically important role in shaping the history of the Levant, where it continues to play a significant political role.[55] As a religious minority, they have often faced persecution from various Muslim regimes, including contemporary Islamic extremism.[56][57][58]

Several theories about the origins of the Druze have been proposed, with the Arabian hypothesis being the most widely accepted among historians, intellectuals, and religious leaders within the Druze community.[59] This hypothesis significantly influences the Druze's self-perception, cultural identity, and both oral and written traditions.[31] It suggests that the Druze are descended from 12 Arab tribes that migrated to Syria before and during the early Islamic period.[60][61][62] This perspective is accepted by all Druze

communities in Syria and Lebanon, as well as by most Druze in Israel.[c][67]

Etymology

The name Druze is probably derived from the name of Muhammad bin Ismail Nashtakin ad-Darazī (from Persian darzi, "seamster") who was an early preacher. Although the Druze consider ad-Darazī a heretic,[68] the name has been used to identify them, possibly by their historical opponents as a way to attach their community with ad-Darazi's poor reputation.

Before becoming public, the movement was secretive and held closed meetings in what was known as Sessions of Wisdom. During this stage a dispute occurred between ad-Darazi and Hamza bin Ali mainly concerning ad-Darazi's ghuluww ("exaggeration"), which refers to the belief that God was incarnated in human beings to ad-Darazi naming himself "The Sword of the Faith", which led Hamza to write an epistle refuting the need for the sword to spread the faith and several epistles refuting the beliefs of the ghulat.

In 1016 ad-Darazi and his followers openly proclaimed their beliefs and called people to join them, causing riots in Cairo against the Unitarian movement including Hamza bin Ali and his followers. This led to the suspension of the movement for one year and the expulsion of ad-Darazi and his supporters.[20]

Although the Druze religious books describe ad-Darazi as the "insolent one" and as the "calf" who is narrow-minded and hasty, the name "Druze" is still used for identification and for historical reasons. In 1018, ad-Darazi was assassinated for his teachings; some sources claim that he was executed by Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah.[68][69]

Some authorities see in the name "Druze" a descriptive epithet, derived from Arabic dārisah ("she who studies").[70] Others have speculated that the word comes from the Persian word Darazo (درز "bliss") or from Shaykh Hussayn ad-Darazī, who was one of the early converts to the faith.[71] In the early stages of the movement, the word "Druze" is rarely mentioned by historians, and in Druze religious texts only the word Muwaḥḥidūn ("Unitarian") appears. The only early Arab historian who mentions the Druze is the eleventh century Christian scholar Yahya of Antioch, who clearly refers to the heretical group created by ad-Darazī, rather than the followers of Hamza ibn 'Alī.[71] As for Western sources, Benjamin of Tudela, the Jewish traveler who passed through Lebanon in or around 1165, was one of the first European writers to refer to the Druze by name. The word Dogziyin ("Druzes") occurs in an early Hebrew edition of his travels, but it is clear that this is a scribal error. Be that as it may, he described the Druze as "mountain dwellers, monotheists, who believe in 'soul eternity' and reincarnation".[72] He also stated that "they loved the Jews".[73]

Location

The number of Druze people worldwide is between 800,000 and one million, with the vast majority residing in the Levant.[74] The primary countries with Druze populations

are Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan.[75][76]

According to the Institute of Druze Studies, as of 1998, approximately 40–50% of Druze live in Syria, 30–40% in Lebanon, 6–7% in Israel, and 1–2% in Jordan.[75] About 2% of the Druze are scattered across other Middle Eastern countries, and there were approximately 20,000 Druze in the United States at that time.[75][77] Scholar Colbert C. Held from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln estimates that the global Druze population is around 1 million. He notes that about 45% to 50% live in Syria, 35% to 40% live in Lebanon, and less than 10% live in Israel. Recently, there has been a growing Druze diaspora.[78]

Outside the Middle East, significant Druze communities exist in Australia, Canada, Europe, Latin America (mainly Venezuela,[10] Colombia and Brazil[dubious – discuss]), the United States, and West Africa. They are Arabs who speak Levantine Arabic and follow a social pattern very similar to those of the other peoples of the Levant (eastern Mediterranean).[79] In 2021 the largest Druze communities outside the Middle East are in Venezuela, with approximately 60,000, and in the United States, with around 50,000.[80] In 2017, the Los Angeles Times reported about 30,000 Druze in the United States, with the largest concentration in Southern California.[81]

History

Early history

The story of the creation of the Druze faith in the days between 1017 and 1018 is dominated by three men and their struggle for influence.

Hamza ibn Ali ibn Ahmad was an Ismaili mystic and scholar from Khorasan, who arrived in Fatimid Egypt in 1014 or 1016, and began to preach a Muwaḥḥidūn ("Unitarian") doctrine.[5]

al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, the sixth Fātimid caliph, became a central figure in the faith being preached by Hamza ibn Ali ibn Ahmad.[82]

Muhammad bin Ismail Nashtakin ad-Darazi arrived in Cairo in 1015 or 1017, possibly from Bukhara, joined the movement and became an important preacher.

Hamza ibn Ali ibn Ahmad arrives in Cairo

Hamza ibn Ali ibn Ahmad, an Ismaili mystic and scholar from Zozan, Khorasan, in the Samanid Empire.[5] arrived in Fatimid Egypt in 1014 or 1016.[5] He assembled a group of scholars that met regularly in the Raydan Mosque, near the Al-Hakim Mosque.[83] In 1017, Hamza began to preach a Muwaḥḥidūn (Unitarian) doctrine.

Hamza gained the support of the Fātimid caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, who issued a decree promoting religious freedom[82][84][85] and eventually became a central figure in the Druze faith.[82][86][87][page needed][d]

al-Darazi arrives in Cairo

Little is known about the early life of al-Darazi. According to most sources, he was born in Bukhara. He is believed to have been of Persian origins and his title al-Darazi is

Persian in origin, meaning "the tailor".[89] He arrived in Cairo in 1015, or 1017, after which he joined the newly emerged Druze movement.[90]

Al-Darazi was converted early to the Unitarian faith and became one of its early preachers. At that time, the movement enlisted a large number of adherents.[91] As the number of his followers grew, he became obsessed with his leadership and gave himself the title "The Sword of the Faith". Al-Darazi argued that he should be the leader of the da'wah rather than Hamza ibn Ali and gave himself the title "Lord of the Guides" because Caliph al-Hakim referred to Hamza as "Guide of the Consented". It is said that al-Darazi allowed wine, forbidden marriages and taught metempsychosis[92] although this may be exaggeration by contemporary and later historians and polemicists.

This attitude led to disputes between Ad-Darazi and Hamza ibn Ali, who disliked his behavior and his arrogance. In the Epistles of Wisdom, Hamza ibn Ali ibn Ahmad warns al-Darazi, saying, "Faith does not need a sword to aid it", but al-Darazi ignored Hamza's warnings and continued to challenge the Imam.

al-Darazi issues the unitarian call

Sixth Fatimid caliph, al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah

The divine call or unitarian call is the Druze period of time that was opened at sunset on Thursday, 30 May 1017 by Ad-Darazi. The call summoned people to a true unitarian belief that removed all attributes (wise, just, outside, inside, etc.) from God.[93] It promoted absolute monotheism and the concepts of supporting your fellow man, true speech and pursuit of oneness with God. These concepts superseded all ritual, law and dogma and requirements for pilgrimage, fasting, holy days, prayer, charity, devotion, creed and particular worship of any prophet or person was downplayed. Sharia was opposed and Druze traditions started during the call continue today, such as meeting for reading, prayer and social gathering on a Thursday instead of a Friday at Khalwats instead of mosques. Such gatherings and traditions were not compulsory and people were encouraged to pursue a state of compliance with the real law of nature governing the universe.[94] Epistle thirteen of the Epistles of Wisdom called it "A spiritual doctrine without any ritualistic imposition".[95][page needed]

The time of the call was seen as a revolution of truth, with missionaries preaching its message all around the Middle East. These messengers were sent out with the Druze epistles and took written vows from believers, whose souls are thought to still exist in the Druze of today. The souls of those who took the vows during the call are believed to be continuously reincarnating in successive generations of Druze until the return of al-Hakim to proclaim a second Divine call and establish a Golden Age of justice and peace for all.[96]

al-Darazi is executed

By 1018, al-Darazi had gathered around him partisans—"Darazites"—who believed that universal reason became incarnated in Adam at the beginning of the world, was then

passed to the prophets, then into Ali, and then into his descendants, the Fatimid Caliphs.[92] Al-Darazi wrote a book laying out this doctrine, but when he read from his book in the principal mosque in Cairo, it caused riots and protests against his claims and many of his followers were killed.

Hamza ibn Ali rejected al-Darazi's ideology, calling him "the insolent one and Satan".[92] The controversy led Caliph al-Hakim to suspend the Druze da'wah in 1018.[97]

In an attempt to gain the support of al-Hakim, al-Darazi started preaching that al-Hakim and his ancestors were the incarnation of God.[91] An inherently modest man, al-Hakim did not believe that he was God, and felt al-Darazi was trying to depict himself as a new prophet.[91] In 1018 Al-Hakim had al-Darazi executed, leaving Hamza the sole leader of the new faith and al-Darazi considered to be a renegade.[91][97][92]

Disappearance of Al-Hakim

Al-Hakim disappeared one night while on his evening ride—presumably assassinated, perhaps at the behest of his formidable elder sister Sitt al-Mulk. The Druze believe he went into Occultation with Hamza ibn Ali and three other prominent preachers, leaving the care of the "Unitarian missionary movement" to a new leader, al-Muqtana Baha'uddin.[citation needed]

The call was suspended briefly between 19 May 1018 and 9 May 1019 during the apostasy of al-Darazi and again between 1021 and 1026 during a period of persecution by the Fatimid caliph al-Zahir li-l'zaz Din Allah for those who had sworn the oath to accept the call.[95][page needed]

Persecutions started forty days after the disappearance into Occultation of al-Hakim, who was thought to have been converting people to the Unitarian faith for over twenty years prior.[95][page needed] Al-Hakim convinced some heretical followers such as al-Darazi of his soteriological divinity and officially declared the Divine call after issuing a decree promoting religious freedom.[98][95][page needed]

Al-Hakim was replaced by his underage son, al-Zahir li-l'zaz Din Allah. The Unitarian/Druze movement acknowledged al-Zahir as the caliph but continued to regard Hamzah as its Imam.[69] The young caliph's regent, Sitt al-Mulk, ordered the army to destroy the movement in 1021.[68] At the same time, Bahā' al-Dīn was assigned the leadership of the Unitarians by Hamza.[69]

For the next seven years, the Druze faced extreme persecution by al-Zahir li-l'zaz Din Allah, who wanted to eradicate the faith.[99] This was the result of a power struggle inside of the Fatimid Caliphate, in which the Druze were viewed with suspicion because they refused to recognize the new caliph as their Imam.

Many spies, mainly the followers of al-Darazi, joined the Unitarian movement to infiltrate the Druze community. The spies set about agitating trouble and soiling the reputation of

the Druze. This resulted in friction with the new caliph who clashed militarily with the Druze community. The clashes ranged from Antioch to Alexandria, where tens of thousands of Druze were slaughtered by the Fatimid army,[68] "this mass persecution known by the Druze as the period of the mihna".[100] The largest massacre was at Antioch, where 5000 prominent Druze were killed, followed by that of Aleppo.[68] As a result, the faith went underground, in hope of survival, as those captured were either forced to renounce their faith or be killed. Druze survivors "were found principally in southern Lebanon and Syria".

In 1038, two years after the death of al-Zahir li-I'zaz Din Allah, the Druze movement was able to resume because the new leadership that replaced him had friendly political ties with at least one prominent Druze leader.[99]

Closing of the unitarian call

In 1043, Baha al-Din al-Muqtana declared that the sect would no longer accept new pledges, and since that time proselytism has been prohibited awaiting al-Hakim's return at the Last Judgment to usher in a new Golden Age.[101][99]

Some Druze and non-Druze scholars like Samy Swayd and Sami Makarem state that this confusion is due to confusion about the role of the early preacher al-Darazi, whose teachings the Druze rejected as heretical.[102] These sources assert that al-Hakim rejected al-Darazi's claims of divinity,[69][91][103][page needed] and ordered the elimination of his movement while supporting that of Hamza ibn Ali.[104]

During the Crusades

Wadi al-Taym, in Lebanon, was one of the two most important centers of Druze missionary activity in the 11th century[105] and was the first area where the Druze appeared in the historical record under the name "Druze".[106] It is generally considered the birthplace of the Druze faith.[107]

It was during the period of Crusader rule in Levant (1099–1291) that the Druze first emerged into the full light of history in the Gharb region of the Chouf. As powerful warriors serving the leaders in Damascus against the Crusades, the Druze were given the task of keeping watch over the Crusaders in the seaport of Beirut, to prevent them from making any encroachments inland. Subsequently, the Druze chiefs of the Gharb placed their considerable military experience at the disposal of the Mamluk sultans in Egypt (1250–1516); first, to assist them in putting an end to what remained of Crusader rule in the coastal Levant, and later to help them safeguard the Lebanese coast against Crusader retaliation by sea.[108]

In the early period of the Crusader era, the Druze feudal power was in the hands of two families, the Tanukhs and the Arslans. From their fortresses in the Gharb area (now in Aley District of southern Mount Lebanon Governorate), the Tanukhs led their incursions into the Phoenician coast and finally succeeded in holding Beirut and the marine plain against the Franks. Because of their fierce battles with the Crusaders, the Druze earned

the respect of the Sunni caliphs and thus gained important political powers.

After the middle of the twelfth century, the Maan family superseded the Tanukhs in Druze leadership. The origin of the family goes back to Prince Ma'an, who made his appearance in Lebanon in the days of the Abbasid caliph al-Mustarshid (1118–35). The Ma'ans chose for their abode the Chouf in south-western Lebanon (southern Mount Lebanon Governorate), overlooking the maritime plain between Beirut and Sidon, and made their headquarters in Baaqlin, which is still a leading Druze village. They were invested with feudal authority by Sultan Nur ad-Din Zengi and furnished respectable contingents to the Muslim ranks in their struggle against the Crusaders.[109][page needed]

Certain aspects of the faith, such as transmigration of souls between adherents and incarnation, were viewed as heretical or kufr (infidelity) and foreign by Sunni and Shia Muslims,[110] but contributed to solidarity among the Druze, who closed their religion to new converts in 1046 due to the threat of persecution.[111] The proto-Salafi thinker ibn Taymiyya believed the Druze had a high level of infidelity besides being apostates. Thus, they were not trustworthy and should not be forgiven. He taught also that Muslims cannot accept Druze penitence nor keep them alive, and that Druze property should be confiscated and their women enslaved.[110][112]

Having cleared the Holy Land of the Crusaders, the Mamluk Sultanate now turned their attention to the schismatic Muslims of Syria. In 1305, after the issuing of a fatwa by the scholar ibn Taymiyya calling for jihad against all non-Sunni Muslim groups like the Druze, Alawites, Isma'ilis, and Twelver Shi'a, al-Nasir Muhammad inflicted a disastrous defeat on the Druze at Keserwan, and forced outward compliance on their part to Sunnism. The Sunni Mamluk campaigns led to the destruction of many Christian churches and monasteries and Druze sanctuaries khilwat, and caused mass destruction of Maronite and Druze villages and the killings and mass displacement of its inhabitants. [113] Lebanese Sunni authors generally write of the campaigns from a pro-Mamluk stance, seeing in them the legitimate Muslim state's efforts to incorporate Mount Lebanon into the Islamic realm, while Druze authors write with a focus on the Druze community's consistent connection to Mount Lebanon and defense of its practical autonomy.[114]

Later, the Druze were severely attacked at Saoufar in the 1585 Ottoman expedition against the Druze after the Ottomans claimed that the Druze had assaulted their caravans near Tripoli.[109][page needed] As a result of the Ottoman experience with the rebellious Druze, the word Durzi in Turkish came, and continues, to mean someone who is the ultimate thug.[115]

The 16th and 17th centuries witnessed a succession of armed Druze rebellions against the Ottomans countered by repeated Ottoman punitive expeditions against the Chouf, in which the Druze population of the area was severely depleted and many villages destroyed. These military measures, severe as they were, did not succeed in reducing

the local Druze to the required degree of subordination. This led the Ottoman government to agree to an arrangement whereby the different nahiyahs (districts) of the Chouf would be granted in iltizam ("fiscal concession") to one of the region's amirs, or leading chiefs, leaving the maintenance of law and order and the collection of taxes in the area in the hands of the appointed amir. This arrangement was to provide the cornerstone for the privileged status ultimately enjoyed by the whole of Mount Lebanon, Druze and Christian areas alike.[108]

Ma'an dynasty

Main article: Ma'n dynasty

The saray in Deir al-Qamar, seat of the Ma'an dynasty under Fakhr al-Din
With the advent of the Ottoman Turks and the conquest of Syria by Sultan Selim I in 1516, the Ma'ans were acknowledged by the new rulers as the feudal lords of southern Lebanon. Druze villages spread and prospered in that region, which under Ma'an leadership so flourished that it acquired the generic term of Jabal Bayt-Ma'an (the mountain home of the Ma'an) or Jabal al-Druze. The latter title has since been usurped by the Hawran region, which since the middle of the 19th century has proven a haven of refuge to Druze emigrants from Lebanon and has become the headquarters of Druze power.[109][page needed]

Under Fakhr-al-Dīn II (Fakhreddin II), the Druze dominion increased until it included Lebanon-Phoenicia and almost all Syria, extending from the edge of the Antioch plain in the north to Safad in the south, with a part of the Syrian desert dominated by Fakhr-al-Din's castle at Tadmur (Palmyra), the ancient capital of Zenobia. The ruins of this castle still stand on a steep hill overlooking the town. Fakhr-al-Din became too strong for his Turkish sovereign in Constantinople. He went so far in 1608 as to sign a commercial treaty with Duke Ferdinand I of Tuscany containing secret military clauses. The Sultan then sent a force against him, and he was compelled to flee the land and seek refuge in the courts of Tuscany and Naples in 1613 and 1615 respectively.

In 1618, political changes in the Ottoman sultanate had resulted in the removal of many enemies of Fakhr-al-Din from power, signaling the prince's triumphant return to Lebanon soon afterwards. Through a clever policy of bribery and warfare, he extended his domains to cover all of modern Lebanon, some of Syria and northern Galilee.

In 1632, Küçük Ahmed Pasha was named Lord of Damascus. Küçük Ahmed Pasha was a rival of Fakhr-al-Din and a friend of the sultan Murad IV, who ordered the pasha and the sultanate's navy to attack Lebanon and depose Fakhr-al-Din.

This time the prince decided to remain in Lebanon and resist the offensive, but the death of his son Ali in Wadi al-Taym was the beginning of his defeat. He later took refuge in Jezzine's grotto, closely followed by Küçük Ahmed Pasha who eventually caught up with him and his family.

A modern, artistic representation of Fakhr-al-Dīn II in the Beiteddine Palace. Fakhr al-Din is considered by the Lebanese as the founder of the country
Fakhr-al-Din was captured, taken to Istanbul, and imprisoned with two of his sons in the infamous Yedi Kule prison. The Sultan had Fakhr-al-Din and his sons killed on 13 April 1635 in Istanbul, bringing an end to an era in the history of Lebanon, which would not regain its current boundaries until it was proclaimed a mandate state and republic in 1920. One version recounts that the younger son was spared, raised in the harem and went on to become Ottoman Ambassador to India.[116]

Fakhr-al-Din II was the first ruler in modern Lebanon to open the doors of his country to foreign Western influences. Under his auspices the French established a khān (hostel) in Sidon, the Florentines a consulate, and Christian missionaries were admitted into the country. Beirut and Sidon, which Fakhr-al-Din II beautified, still bear traces of his benign rule. See the new biography of this Prince, based on original sources, by TJ Gorton: *Renaissance Emir: a Druze Warlord at the Court of the Medici* (London, Quartet Books, 2013), for an updated view of his life.

Fakhr ad Din II was succeeded in 1635 by his nephew Mulhim Ma'n, who ruled through his death in 1658. (Fakhr ad Din's only surviving son, Husayn, lived the rest of his life as a court official in Constantinople.) Emir Mulhim exercised iltizam taxation rights in the Shuf, Gharb, Jurd, Matn, and Kisrawan districts of Lebanon. Mulhim's forces battled and defeated those of Mustafa Pasha, Beylerbey of Damascus, in 1642, but he is reported by historians to have been otherwise loyal to Ottoman rule.[117]

Following Mulhim's death, his sons Ahmad and Korkmaz entered into a power struggle with other Ottoman-backed Druze leaders. In 1660, the Ottoman Empire moved to reorganize the region, placing the sanjaks (districts) of Sidon-Beirut and Safed in a newly formed province of Sidon, a move seen by local Druze as an attempt to assert control.[118] Contemporary historian Istifan al-Duwayhi reports that Korkmaz was killed in act of treachery by the Beylerbey of Damascus in 1662.[118] Ahmad however emerged victorious in the power struggle among the Druze in 1667, but the Ma'nīs lost control of Safad[119] and retreated to controlling the iltizam of the Shuf mountains and Kisrawan.[120] Ahmad continued as local ruler through his death from natural causes, without heir, in 1697.[119]

During the Ottoman–Habsburg War (1683–1699), Ahmad Ma'n collaborated in a rebellion against the Ottomans which extended beyond his death.[119] iltizam rights in Shuf and Kisrawan passed to the rising Shihab family through female-line inheritance. [120]

Shihab Dynasty

Main article: Shihab family

Druze woman wearing a tantour during the 1870s in Chouf, Ottoman Lebanon

As early as the days of Saladin, and while the Ma'ans were still in complete control over southern Lebanon, the Shihab tribe, originally Hijaz Arabs, but later settled in Ḥawran, advanced from Ḥawran, in 1172, and settled in Wadi al-Taym at the foot of mount Hermon. They soon made an alliance with the Ma'ans and were acknowledged as the Druze chiefs in Wadi al-Taym. At the end of the 17th century (1697) the Shihabs succeeded the Ma'ans in the feudal leadership of Druze southern Lebanon, although they reportedly professed Sunni Islam, they showed sympathy with Druze, the religion of the majority of their subjects.

The Shihab leadership continued until the middle of the 19th century and culminated in the illustrious governorship of Amir Bashir Shihab II (1788–1840) who, after Fakhr-al-Din, was the most powerful feudal lord Lebanon produced. Though governor of the Druze Mountain, Bashir was a crypto-Christian, and it was he whose aid Napoleon solicited in 1799 during his campaign against Syria. The "Druze-Christian alliance" during this century was the major factor enabling the Shehab dynasty to maintain power. [121]

Having consolidated his conquests in Syria (1831–1838), Ibrahim Pasha, son of the viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha, made the fatal mistake of trying to disarm the Christians and Druze of the Lebanon and to draft the latter into his army. This was contrary to the principles of the life of independence which these mountaineers had always lived, and resulted in a general uprising against Egyptian rule.[122] The Druze of Wadi al-Taym and Ḥawran, under the leadership of Shibli al-Aryan, distinguished themselves in their stubborn resistance at their inaccessible headquarters, al-Laja, lying southeast of Damascus.[109][page needed]

Qaysites and the Yemenites

Main article: Battle of Ain Darra

Meeting of Druze and Ottoman leaders in Damascus, about the control of Jebel Druze
The conquest of Syria by the Muslim Arabs in the middle of the seventh century introduced into the land two political factions later called the Qaysites and the Yemenites. The Qaysite party represented the Bedouin Arabs who were regarded as inferior by the Yemenites who were earlier and more cultured emigrants into Syria from southern Arabia. Druze and Christians grouped in political, rather than religious, parties; the party lines in Lebanon obliterated ethnic and religious lines and the people grouped themselves into one or the other of these two parties regardless of their religious affiliations. The sanguinary feuds between these two factions depleted, in course of time, the manhood of the Lebanon and ended in the decisive battle of Ain Dara in 1711, which resulted in the utter defeat of the Yemenite party. Many Yemenite Druze thereupon migrated to the Hauran region, laying the foundation of Druze power there. [109][page needed]

The Qays were led by Emir Haydar of the Shihab dynasty and consisted of the Druze clans of Jumblatt, Talhuq, Imad and Abd al-Malik and the Maronite clan of Khazen. The

Yamani faction was led by Mahmoud Abu Harmoush and consisted of the Druze Alam al-Din, Arslan and Sawaf clans. The Yamani faction also had backing from the Ottoman provincial authorities of Sidon and Damascus.[123] The battle ended in a rout of the Yamani faction and resulted in the consolidation of Qaysi political and fiscal domination over Mount Lebanon.[123] The battle's outcome also precipitated a mass migration of pro-Yamani Druze nobility and peasants from Mount Lebanon to the eastern Hauran, in a mountainous area today known as Jabal al-Druze. This area had seen previous waves of Druze migration starting in 1685. Consequently, the Maronite Christian population in Mount Lebanon became the dominant group.[123] The Yamani Druze exodus significantly contributed to a demographic shift in Mount Lebanon, with Maronites and other Christians, namely from the Greek Orthodox and Melkite sects, making up a large share of the population at the expense of the Druze.[124]

Civil conflict of 1860

Main article: 1860 civil conflict in Mount Lebanon and Damascus

Left to right: Christian woman from Zahlé, Lebanese Druze woman, and a Christian woman from Zgharta (1873)

The relationship between the Druze and Christians has been characterized by harmony and coexistence,[125][126] with amicable relations between the two groups prevailing throughout history, with the exception of some periods, including 1860 civil conflict in Mount Lebanon and Damascus.[127][page needed][128] In 1840, social disturbances started between Druze and their Christian Maronite neighbors, who had previously been on friendly terms. This culminated in the civil war of 1860.[109][page needed]

After the Shehab dynasty converted to Christianity, some prominent Druze families, including the Druze Abi-Lamma clan—who were close allies of the Shihabs—also converted to Christianity and joined the Maronite Church.[129][130][131] The Druze community and feudal leaders came under attack from the regime with the collaboration of the Maronite Catholic Church, and the Druze lost most of their political and feudal powers.[132] Also, the Druze formed an alliance with Britain and allowed Protestant missionaries to enter Mount Lebanon, creating tension between them and the Catholic Maronites.[133]

The Maronite-Druze conflict in 1840–60 was an outgrowth of the Maronite independence movement,[citation needed] directed against the Druze, Druze feudalism, and the Ottoman-Turks. The civil war was not therefore a religious war,[citation needed] except in Damascus, where it spread and where the vastly non-Druze population was anti-Christian.[134] This animosity was fueled by economic disparities, with Christians, who were generally wealthier and more prosperous, compare to the economically struggling Muslim residents.[135] The movement culminated with the 1859–60 massacre and defeat of the Maronites by the Druze. The civil war of 1860 cost the Maronites some ten thousand lives in Damascus, Zahlé, Deir al-Qamar, Hasbaya, and other towns of Lebanon.[136]

The European powers then determined to intervene, and authorized the landing in Beirut of a body of French troops under General Beaufort d'Hautpoul, whose inscription can still be seen on the historic rock at the mouth of Nahr al-Kalb. French intervention on behalf of the Maronites did not help the Maronite national movement, since France was restricted in 1860 by the British government, which did not want the Ottoman Empire dismembered. But European intervention pressured the Turks to treat the Maronites more justly.[137] Following the recommendations of the powers, the Ottoman Porte granted Lebanon local autonomy, guaranteed by the powers, under a Maronite governor. This autonomy was maintained until World War I.[109][page needed][138][page needed]

The Maronite Catholics and the Druze founded modern Lebanon in the early eighteenth century, through the ruling and social system known as the "Maronite-Druze dualism" which developed in Ottoman-era Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate,[139] creating one of the calmest atmospheres that Lebanon had ever lived in.[140] The ruling and social system in the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate was formed from the Maronite-Druze dualism, and the security stability and Druze-Maronite coexistence in the Mutasarrifate allowed the development of the economy and the system of government.[140]

Rebellion in Hauran

Main article: Hauran Druze Rebellion

The Hauran rebellion was a violent Druze uprising against Ottoman authority in the Syrian province, which erupted in May 1909. The rebellion was led by the al-Atrash family, originated in local disputes and Druze unwillingness to pay taxes and conscript into the Ottoman Army. The rebellion ended in brutal suppression of the Druze by General Sami Pasha al-Farouqi, significant depopulation of the Hauran region and execution of the Druze leaders in 1910. In the outcome of the revolt, 2,000 Druze were killed, a similar number wounded, and hundreds of Druze fighters imprisoned.[141] Al-Farouqi also disarmed the population, extracted significant taxes, and launched a census of the region.

Modern history

In Lebanon, Syria, Israel, and Jordan, the Druzites have official recognition as a separate religious community with its own religious court system.[142][page needed] [143]

Although most Druze no longer consider themselves Muslim, Al Azhar of Egypt recognized them in 1959 as one of the Islamic sects in the Al-Azhar Shia Fatwa due to political reasons, as Gamal Abdel Nasser saw it as a tool to spread his appeal and influence across the entire Arab world.[144]

The Druze religion does not endorse separatism, and urges blending with the communities they reside in; the Druze have often done so to avoid persecution. Yet the Druze also have a history of resistance to occupying powers, and they have at times enjoyed more freedom than most other groups living in the Levant.[143]

In Syria

Main article: Druze in Syria

Druze warriors preparing to go to battle with Sultan Pasha al-Atrash in 1925

In Syria, most Druzes live in the Jebel al-Druze, a rugged and mountainous region in the southwest of the country, which is more than 90 percent Druze inhabited; some 120 villages are exclusively so.[145][page needed] Other notable communities live in the Harim Mountains, the Damascus suburb of Jaramana, and on the southeast slopes of Mount Hermon. A large Syrian Druze community historically lived in the Golan Heights, but following wars with Israel in 1967 and 1973, many of these Druze fled to other parts of Syria; most of those who remained live in a handful of villages in the disputed zone, while only a few live in the narrow remnant of Quneitra Governorate that is still under effective Syrian control.

Druze celebrating their independence in 1925

The Druze always played a far more important role in Syrian politics than its comparatively small population would suggest. With a community of little more than 100,000 in 1949, or roughly three percent of the Syrian population, the Druze of Syria's southwestern mountains constituted a potent force in Syrian politics and played a leading role in the nationalist struggle against the French. Under the military leadership of Sultan Pasha al-Atrash, the Druze provided much of the military force behind the Syrian Revolution of 1925–27. In 1945, Amir Hasan al-Atrash, the paramount political leader of the Jebel al-Druze, led the Druze military units in a successful revolt against the French, making the Jebel al-Druze the first and only region in Syria to liberate itself from French rule without British assistance. At independence the Druze, made confident by their successes, expected that Damascus would reward them for their many sacrifices on the battlefield. They demanded to keep their autonomous administration and many political privileges accorded them by the French and sought generous economic assistance from the newly independent government.[145][page needed]

Druze leaders meeting in Jebel al-Druze, Syria, 1926

When a local paper in 1945 reported that President Shukri al-Quwatli (1943–49) had called the Druze a "dangerous minority", Sultan Pasha al-Atrash flew into a rage and demanded a public retraction. If it were not forthcoming, he announced, the Druze would indeed become "dangerous", and a force of 4,000 Druze warriors would "occupy the city of Damascus". Quwatli could not dismiss Sultan Pasha's threat. The military balance of power in Syria was tilted in favor of the Druze, at least until the military build up during the 1948 War in Palestine. One advisor to the Syrian Defense Department warned in 1946 that the Syrian army was "useless", and that the Druze could "take Damascus and capture the present leaders in a breeze".[145][page needed]

During the four years of Adib Shishakli's rule in Syria (December 1949 to February 1954) (on 25 August 1952: Adib al-Shishakli created the Arab Liberation Movement

(ALM), a progressive party with pan-Arabist and socialist views),[146] the Druze community was subjected to heavy attack by the Syrian government. Shishakli believed that among his many opponents in Syria, the Druze were the most potentially dangerous, and he was determined to crush them. He frequently proclaimed: "My enemies are like a serpent: The head is the Jebel al-Druze, the stomach Homs, and the tail Aleppo. If I crush the head, the serpent will die." Shishakli dispatched 10,000 regular troops to occupy the Jebel al-Druze. Several towns were bombarded with heavy weapons, killing scores of civilians and destroying many houses. According to Druze accounts, Shishakli encouraged neighboring Bedouin tribes to plunder the defenseless population and allowed his own troops to run amok.[145][page needed]

Shishakli launched a brutal campaign to defame the Druze for their religion and politics. He accused the entire community of treason, at times claiming they were in the employ of the British and Hashimites, at others that they were fighting for Israel against the Arabs. He even produced a cache of Israeli weapons allegedly discovered in the Jabal. Even more painful for the Druze community was his publication of "falsified Druze religious texts" and false testimonials ascribed to leading Druze sheikhs designed to stir up sectarian hatred. This propaganda also was broadcast in the Arab world, mainly Egypt. Shishakli was assassinated in Brazil on 27 September 1964 by a Druze seeking revenge for Shishakli's bombardment of the Jebel al-Druze.[145][page needed]

Sculpture of Sultan al-Atrash in Majdal Shams

He forcibly integrated minorities into the national Syrian social structure, his "Syrianization" of Alawite and Druze territories had to be accomplished in part using violence. To this end, al-Shishakli encouraged the stigmatization of minorities. He saw minority demands as tantamount to treason. His increasingly chauvinistic notions of Arab nationalism were predicated on the denial that "minorities" existed in Syria.[147][page needed]

After the Shishakli's military campaign, the Druze community lost much of its political influence, but many Druze military officers played important roles in the Ba'ath government currently ruling Syria.[145][page needed]

In 1967, a community of Druze in the Golan Heights came under Israeli control, today numbering 23,000 (in 2019).[148][149][150]

Before the Syrian civil war, it was estimated that around 700,000 Druze lived in Syria in 2010, constituting about 3% of the population.[151] Of these, approximately 337,500 resided in the Suwayda Governorate, which had a Druze majority of around 90% and a significant Christian minority.[152][151] This region accounted for 48.2% of the total Druze population in Syria.[153] Additionally, about 250,000 Druze, or 35.7% of the total Druze population, lived in Damascus and its surrounding areas, including Jaramana, Sahnaya, and Jdeidat Artouz. Approximately 30,000 Druze lived on the eastern side of Mount Hermon, while around 25,000 Druze were spread across 14 villages in Jabal al-

Summaq in Idlib Governorate.[151]

The Qalb Loze massacre was a reported massacre of Syrian Druze on 10 June 2015 in the village of Qalb Loze in Syria's northwestern Idlib Governorate in which 20–24 Druze were killed. On 25 July 2018, a group of ISIS-affiliated attackers entered the Druze city of Suwayda and initiated a series of gunfights and suicide bombings on its streets, killing at least 258 people, the vast majority of them civilians.[154]

Several Druze militias fought in the Syrian civil war. These included Jaysh al-Muwahhidin which largely engaged in defensive war, though were also described as supporters of Bashar al-Assad and the Ba'athist government.[155] The Druze Al-Jabal Brigade played a major role in the 2024 Syrian opposition offensives, which toppled the Ba'athists.[156]

In Lebanon

Main article: Druze in Lebanon

Prophet Job shrine in Niha village in the Chouf region of Lebanon.[157]

Duration: 43 seconds.0:43

A market in a Lebanese Druze town called Hasbaya, 1967

The Druzite community in Lebanon played an important role in the formation of the modern state of Lebanon,[139] and even though they are a minority they play an important role in the Lebanese political scene. Before and during the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90), the Druze were in favor of Pan-Arabism and Palestinian resistance represented by the PLO. Most of the community supported the Progressive Socialist Party formed by their leader Kamal Jumblatt and they fought alongside other leftist and Palestinian parties against the Lebanese Front that was mainly constituted of Christians. At the time, the Lebanese government and economy were running under the significant influence of elites within the Maronite Christian community.[158][159] After the assassination of Kamal Jumblatt on 16 March 1977, his son Walid Jumblatt took the leadership of the party and played an important role in preserving his father's legacy after winning the Mountain War and sustained the existence of the Druze community during the sectarian bloodshed that lasted until 1990.

In August 2001, Maronite Catholic Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir toured the predominantly Druze Chouf region of Mount Lebanon and visited Mukhtara, the ancestral stronghold of Druze leader Walid Jumblatt. The tumultuous reception that Sfeir received not only signified a historic reconciliation between Maronites and Druze, who had fought a bloody war in 1983–1984, but underscored the fact that the banner of Lebanese sovereignty had broad multi-confessional appeal[160] and was a cornerstone for the Cedar Revolution in 2005. Jumblatt's post-2005 position diverged sharply from the tradition of his family. He also accused Damascus of being behind the 1977 assassination of his father, Kamal Jumblatt, expressing for the first time what many knew he privately suspected. The BBC describes Jumblatt as "the leader of Lebanon's most powerful Druze clan and heir to a leftist political dynasty".[161] The second largest

political party supported by Druze is the Lebanese Democratic Party led by Prince Talal Arslan, the son of Lebanese independence hero Emir Majid Arslan.

The Druze community is primarily located in the rural and mountainous regions to the east and south of Beirut.[162] They represent approximately 5.2 percent of Lebanon's population and are spread across 136 villages in areas such as Hasbaya, Rashaya, Chouf, Aley, Marjeyoun and Beirut. The Druze make up the majority in Aley, Baakleen, Hasbaya and Rashaya. Specifically, they constitute over half of the population in the Aley District, about a third in the Rashaya District, and around a quarter in both the Chouf and Matn Districts.[163]

In Israel

Main article: Druze in Israel

See also: 1982 Golan Heights Druze general strike

Israeli Druze Scouts march to Jethro's tomb. Today, thousands of Israeli Druze belong to such "Druze Zionist" movements.[164]

The Druzites form a religious minority in Israel of more than 100,000, mostly residing in the north of the country.[165] In 2004, there were 102,000 Druze living in the country. [166] In 2010, the population of Israeli Druze citizens grew to over 125,000. At the end of 2018, there were 143,000 in Israel and the Israeli-occupied portion of the Golan Heights.[9] Most Israeli Druze identify ethnically as Arabs.[167] Today, thousands of Israeli Druze belong to "Druze Zionist" movements.[164]

According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics census in 2020, the Druze make up about 7.6% of the Arab citizens of Israel.[168] By the end of 2019, around 81% of the Israeli Druze population resided in the Northern District, while 19% were in the Haifa District. The largest Druze communities are found in Daliyat al-Karmel and Yirka (also known as Yarka).[169] The Druze live in 19 towns and villages scattered across the mountaintops in northern Israel, either in exclusively Druze areas or in mixed communities with Christians and Muslims.[169]

The Galilean Druze and Druze of the Haifa region received Israeli citizenship automatically in 1948. After Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in 1967 and annexed it to Israel in 1981, the Druze of the Golan Heights were offered full Israeli citizenship under the Golan Heights Law. Most declined Israeli citizenship and retain Syrian citizenship and identity and are treated as permanent residents of Israel.[170] As of 2011, fewer than 10% of the Druze population in the Golan Heights had accepted Israeli citizenship.[171]

In 1957, the Israeli government designated the Druze a distinct religious community at the request of its communal leaders.[172][173] The Druze are Arabic-speaking citizens of Israel and serve in the Israel Defense Forces, just as most citizens do in Israel. Members of the community have attained top positions in Israeli politics and public service.[174] The number of Druze parliament members usually exceeds their

proportion in the Israeli population, and they are integrated within several political parties.

Some scholars maintain that Israel has tried to separate the Druze from other Arab communities, and that the effort has influenced the way Israel's Druze perceive their modern identity.[63][64] Survey data suggests that Israeli Druze prioritize their identity first as Druze (religiously), second as Arabs (culturally and ethnically), and third as Israelis (citizenship-wise).[33] A small minority of them identify as Palestinians, distinguishing them from the majority of other Arab citizens of Israel, who predominantly identify as Palestinians.[166]

In Jordan

Main article: Druze in Jordan

The Druzites form a religious minority in Jordan of around 32,000, mostly residing in the northwestern part of the country.[14] The main areas where they live are Amman, Azraq, Zarqa, Russiefa, Umm Al-Quttein, Aqaba and Mafraq. Druze settlement in Jordan began in 1918, when 22 Druze families left Jabal al-Druze for al-Azraq following the withdrawal of the Turks from the region.[175]

In the diaspora

Venezuela hosts the largest Druze communities outside the Middle East,[176][177] estimated at 60,000 individuals.[80] Most of them trace their ancestry back to Lebanon and Syria. More than 200,000 people from the Suwayda area hold Venezuelan citizenship, the majority of whom belong to the Syria's Druze sect and immigrated to Venezuela in the past century.[178] Arab immigration to Venezuela started as early as the 19th and 20th centuries, with migrants primarily hailing from the Ottoman provinces of Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine. They settled predominantly in Caracas, and have significantly influenced Venezuelan culture, particularly in terms of Arabic food and music. Religiously, the Arab-Venezuelans community consists mainly of Druze and Christians, who are affiliated with the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic Churches.[179] The early Druze migrants to Venezuela assimilated well into the local population, with some even converting Catholicism.[180] Nevertheless, many retained a strong Druze and Arab identity, along with adherence to Druze values. A prominent example of Druze influence in Venezuela is the former vice president, Tareck El Aissami, who is of Druze descent.[10][181] Other notable Venezuelan figures of Druze origin include Haifa El Aissami and Tarek William Saab.[182]

The United States is the second largest home of Druze communities outside the Middle East after Venezuela.[183] Estimates vary between about 30,000[184] and 50,000[183] Druzes in the United States, with the largest concentration in Southern California.[184] American Druze are mostly of Lebanese and Syrian descent.[184] Members of the Druze faith face the difficulty of finding a Druze partner and practicing endogamy; marriage outside the Druze faith is strongly discouraged according to the Druze doctrine. They also face the pressure of keeping the religion alive because many Druze immigrants to the United States converted to Protestantism, becoming communicants of

the Presbyterian or Methodist churches.[185][186]

Beliefs

God

The Druze conception of the deity is declared by them to be one of strict and uncompromising unity. The main Druze doctrine states that God is both transcendent and immanent, in which he is above all attributes, but at the same time, he is present. [187]

In their desire to maintain a rigid confession of unity, they stripped from God all attributes (tanzīh). In God, there are no attributes distinct from his essence. He is wise, mighty, and just, not by wisdom, might, and justice, but by his own essence. God is "the whole of existence", rather than merely "above existence" or on his throne, which would make him "limited". There is neither "how", "when", nor "where" about him; in this way, he is incomprehensible.[188][page needed]

In this dogma, they are similar to the semi-philosophical, semi-religious body which flourished under Al-Ma'mun and was known by the name of Mu'tazila and the fraternal order of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwan al-Şafa').[109][page needed]

Unlike the Mu'tazila, and similar to some branches of Sufism, the Druze believe in the concept of Tajalli (meaning "theophany").[188][page needed] Tajalli is often misunderstood by scholars and writers and is usually confused with the concept of incarnation.

[Incarnation] is the core spiritual beliefs in the Druze and some other intellectual and spiritual traditions ... In a mystical sense, it refers to the light of God experienced by certain mystics who have reached a high level of purity in their spiritual journey. Thus, God is perceived as the Lahut [the divine] who manifests His Light in the Station (Maqaam) of the Nasut [material realm] without the Nasut becoming Lahut. This is like one's image in the mirror: One is in the mirror, but does not become the mirror. The Druze manuscripts are emphatic and warn against the belief that the Nasut is God ... Neglecting this warning, individual seekers, scholars, and other spectators have considered al-Hakim and other figures divine. ... In the Druze scriptural view, Tajalli takes a central stage. One author comments that Tajalli occurs when the seeker's humanity is annihilated so that divine attributes and light are experienced by the person. [188][page needed]

Scriptures

Druze sacred texts include the Quran and the Epistles of Wisdom.[189] Other ancient Druze writings include the Rasa'il al-Hind (Epistles of India) and the previously lost (or hidden) manuscripts such as al-Munfarid bi-Dhatihi and al-Sharia al-Ruhaniyya, as well as others such as didactic and polemic treatises.[190]

Reincarnation

See also: Reincarnation § Druze

Reincarnation is a paramount principle in the Druze faith.[191] Reincarnations occur instantly at one's death because there is an eternal duality of the body and the soul and it is impossible for the soul to exist without the body. A human soul will transfer only to a human body, in contrast to the Neoplatonic, Hindu and Buddhist belief systems, according to which souls can transfer to any living creature. Furthermore, a male Druze can be reincarnated only as another male Druze and a female Druze only as another female Druze. A Druze cannot be reincarnated in the body of a non-Druze. Additionally, souls cannot be divided and the number of souls existing in the universe is finite.[192] The cycle of rebirth is continuous and the only way to escape is through successive reincarnations. When this occurs, the soul is united with the Cosmic Mind and achieves the ultimate happiness.[193]

Pact of Time Custodian

The Pact of Time Custodian (Mithāq Walī al-zamān) is considered the entrance to the Druze religion, and they believe that all Druze in their past lives have signed this Charter, and Druze believe that this Charter embodies with human souls after death.

I rely on our Moula Al-Hakim the lonely God, the individual, the eternal, who is out of couples and numbers, (someone) the son of (someone) has approved recognition enjoined on himself and on his soul, in a healthy of his mind and his body, permissibility aversive is obedient and not forced, to repudiate from all creeds, articles and all religions and beliefs on the differences varieties, and he does not know something except obedience of almighty Moulana Al-Hakim, and obedience is worship and that it does not engage in worship anyone ever attended or wait, and that he had handed his soul and his body and his money and all he owns to almighty Maulana Al-Hakim.[194]

[clarification needed]

The Druze also use a similar formula, called al-'ahd, when one is initiated into the 'Uqqāl.[195]

Sanctuaries

Druze clerics in Khalwat al-Bayada

The prayer-houses of the Druze are called khilwa, khalwa, khilwat or khalwat. The primary sanctuary of the Druze is at Khalwat al-Bayada.[196]

Esotericism

The Druze believe that many teachings given by prophets, religious leaders and holy books have esoteric meanings preserved for those of intellect, in which some teachings are symbolic and allegorical in nature, and divide the understanding of holy books and teachings into three layers.

These layers, according to the Druze, are as follows:

The obvious or exoteric (zahir), accessible to anyone who can read or hear;
The hidden or esoteric (batin), accessible to those who are willing to search and learn through the concept of exegesis;
And the hidden of the hidden, a concept known as anagoge, inaccessible to all but a few really enlightened individuals who truly understand the nature of the universe.[197]
Druze do not believe that the esoteric meaning abrogates or necessarily abolishes the exoteric one. Hamza bin Ali refutes such claims by stating that if the esoteric interpretation of taharah (purity) is purity of the heart and soul, it doesn't mean that a person can discard his physical purity, as salat (prayer) is useless if a person is untruthful in his speech and that the esoteric and exoteric meanings complement each other.[198]

Seven Druze precepts

Further information: Seven pillars of Ismailism § Druze list

The Druze follow seven moral precepts or duties that are considered the core of the faith.[193] The Seven Druze precepts are:[199]

Veracity in speech and the truthfulness of the tongue.

Protection and mutual aid to the brethren in faith.

Renunciation of all forms of former worship (specifically, invalid creeds) and false belief.

Repudiation of the devil (Iblis), and all forces of evil (translated from Arabic Toghyan, meaning "despotism").

Confession of God's unity.

Acquiescence in God's acts no matter what they be.

Absolute submission and resignation to God's divine will in both secret and public.

Taqiyya

Complicating their identity is the custom of taqiyya—concealing or disguising their beliefs when necessary—that they adopted from Ismailism and the esoteric nature of the faith, in which many teachings are kept secretive. This is done in order to keep the religion from those who are not yet prepared to accept the teachings and therefore could misunderstand it, as well as to protect the community when it is in danger. Some claim to be Muslim or Christian in order to avoid persecution; some do not.[200] Druze in different states can have radically different lifestyles.[201]

Theophany

Hamza ibn Ali ibn Ahmad is considered the founder of the Druze and the primary author of the Druze manuscripts.[5] He proclaimed that God had become human and taken the form of man.[202][203][204] Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah is an important figure in the Druze faith whose eponymous founder ad-Darazi proclaimed him as the incarnation of God in 1018.[202][205] The Druze believe that al-Hākīm will return at the end of times to judge the world and establish his kingdom, while Hamza ibn Ali is considered a reincarnation of Jesus, the Universal Mind 'Aql, closely associated with al-Hākīm.[41]

The author of the epistle "The Report of the Jewish and Christians" (Khabar al-Yahud wal Nasara), part of first volume of the Epistles of Wisdom, appears to have been a

Druze individual. The account itself identifies him as Hamza ibn Ali, a supporter of al-Hakim's divinity and the founder of the Druze faith.[206]

Historian David R. W. Bryer defines the Druzes as ghulat of Isma'ilism, since they exaggerated the cult of the caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah and considered him divine; he also defines the Druzes as a religion that deviated from Islam.[207] He also added that as a result of this deviation, the Druze faith "seems as different from Islam as Islam is from Christianity or Christianity is from Judaism".[208]

Prophethood

Druze dignitaries celebrating the Nabi Shu'ayb festival at the tomb of the prophet in Hittin, Israel

Recognition of prophets in the Druze religion is divided into three sort-of subcategories, the prophet themselves (natiq), their disciples (asas), and witnesses to their message (hujjah).

The number 5 contains an unstated significance within the Druze faith; it is believed in this area that great prophets come in groups of five. In the time of the ancient Greeks, these five were represented by Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Parmenides, and Empedocles. In the first century, the five were represented by Jesus Christ,[209][210] John the Baptist,[211] Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, and Saint Luke.[53] In the time of the faith's foundation, the five were Hamza ibn Ali ibn Ahmad, Muḥammad ibn Wahb al-Qurashī, Abū'l-Khayr Salama ibn Abd al-Wahhab al-Samurri, Ismā'īl ibn Muḥammad at-Tamīmī, and Al-Muqtana Baha'uddin.

Druze tradition honors and reveres Hamza ibn Ali Ahmad and Salman the Persian as "mentors" and "prophets", believed to be reincarnations of the monotheistic idea.[212] [51]

Other beliefs

The Druze allow divorce, although it is discouraged, and circumcision is not necessary. Apostasy is forbidden,[213] and they usually have religious services on Thursday evenings.[36] Druze follow Sunni Hanafi law on issues which their own faith has no particular rulings about.[214][215]

Formal Druze worship is confined to weekly meeting on Thursday evenings, during which all members of community gather together to discuss local issues before those not initiated into the secrets of the faith (the juhḥāl, or the ignorant) are dismissed, and those who are "uqqāl" or "enlightened" (those few initiated in the Druze holy books) remain to read and study.[36]

Religious symbol

The Druze strictly avoid iconography, but use five colors ("Five Limits" حدود خمس khams ḥudūd) as a religious symbol:[216][217] green, red, yellow, blue, and white. The five limits were listed by Ismail at-Tamimi (d. 1030) in the Epistle of the Candle (risālat aš-šam'a) as:

First limit: Hamza ibn Ali (حمزة ابن علي ابن أحمد) (or Jesus according to other sources) [218]

Second limit: Ismail ibn Muhamed ibn Hamed at-Tamimi (Ismail at-Tamimi) (إسماعيل ابن محمد بن حامد التميمي)

Third limit: Muhamed ibn Wahb (محمد ابن وهب)

Fourth limit (as-Sābiq the anterior): Salama ibn abd al-Wahhab (سلامة ابن عبد الوهاب)

Fifth limit (al-Ilahiq the posterior): Ali ibn Ahmed as-Samouqi (علي ابن أحمد السموقي)

Each of the colors representing the five limits pertains to a metaphysical power called ḥadd, literally "a limit", as in the distinctions that separate humans from animals, or the powers that make humans the animalistic body. Each ḥadd is color-coded in the following manner:

Green for 'Aql "the Universal Mind/Intelligence/Nous",

Red for Nafs "the Universal Soul/Anima mundi",

Yellow for Kalima "the Word/Logos",

Blue for Sābiq (السابق) "the anterior/potentiality/cause/precedent", the first intellect.

White for al-Ilahiq (اللاحق) "the posterior/future/effect/Immanence".

The mind generates qualia and gives consciousness.[219] The soul embodies the mind and is responsible for transmigration and the character of oneself. The word, which is the atom of language, communicates qualia between humans and represents the platonic forms in the sensible world. The Sābiq and Tālī is the ability to perceive and learn from the past and plan for the future and predict it.

The colors can be arranged in vertically descending stripes (as a flag), or a five-pointed star.[220] The stripes are a diagrammatic cut of the spheres in neoplatonic philosophy, while the five-pointed star embodies the golden ratio, phi, as a symbol of temperance and a life of moderation.

Prayer houses and holy places

Jethro shrine and temple of Druze in Hittin, northern Israel

Holy places of the Druze are archaeological sites important to the community and associated with religious holidays;[221] the most notable example being Nabi Shu'ayb, dedicated to Jethro, who is a central figure of the Druze religion. Druze make pilgrimages to this site on the holiday of Ziyarat al-Nabi Shu'ayb.[222]

Druze prayer house in Daliat al-Karmel, Israel

One of the most important features of the Druze village having a central role in social life is the khilwa or khalwa—a house of prayer, retreat and religious unity. The khalwat may be known as majlis in local languages.[223]

The second type of religious shrine is one associated with the anniversary of a historic event or death of a prophet. If it is a mausoleum the Druze call it mazār and if it is a shrine they call it maqām. The holy places become more important to the community in times of adversity and calamity. The holy places and shrines of the Druze are scattered in various villages, in places where they are protected and cared for. They are found in Syria, Lebanon and Israel.[221]

Initiates and "ignorant" members

Druze sheikh (‘uqqāl) wearing religious dress

The Druze do not recognize any religious hierarchy.[224] As such, there is no "Druze clergy". Those few initiated in the Druze holy books are called عقال ‘uqqāl ("the wise"), [225] while the regular members of the group are called جهال juhhāl ("the ignorant"). [226] Some find this classification disparaging however, and as such, terms like روحاني rūḥāniyy, meaning "(concerned with the) spiritual", and جسماني jismāniyy, meaning "(concerned with the) physical", are also used.

Given the strict religious, intellectual and spiritual requirements, most of the Druze are not initiated and might be referred to as al-Juhhāl (جهال), literally "the Ignorant", but in practice referring to the non-initiated Druze.[227] However, that term is seldom used by the Druze. Those Druze are not granted access to the Druze holy literature or allowed to attend the initiated religious meetings of the ‘uqqāl. The "juhhāl" are the vast majority of the Druze community.[224] The cohesiveness and frequent inter-community social interaction, however, enables most Druze to have an idea about their broad ethical requirements and have some sense of what their theology consists of (albeit often flawed).

The initiated religious group, which includes both men and women (less than 10% of the population), is called al-‘Uqqāl (عقال "the Knowledgeable Initiates"). They might or might not dress differently, although most wear a costume that was characteristic of mountain people in previous centuries. Women can opt to wear al-mandīl, a loose white veil, especially in the presence of other people. They wear al-mandīl on their heads to cover their hair and wrap it around their mouths. They wear black shirts and long skirts covering their legs to their ankles. Male ‘uqqāl often grow mustaches, and wear dark Levantine-Turkish traditional dresses, called the shirwal, with white turbans that vary according to the seniority of the ‘uqqāl. Traditionally the Druze women have played an important role both socially and religiously inside the community.[224]

Al-‘uqqāl have equal rights to al-Juhhāl, but establish a hierarchy of respect based on

religious service. The most influential of al-‘uqqāl become Ajawīd, recognized religious leaders, and from this group the spiritual leaders of the Druze are assigned. While the Shaykh al-‘Aql, which is an official position in Syria, Lebanon, and Israel, is elected by the local community and serves as the head of the Druze religious council, judges from the Druze religious courts are usually elected for this position. Unlike the spiritual leaders, the authority of the Shaykh al-‘Aql is limited to the country he is elected in, though in some instances spiritual leaders are elected to this position.[228]

The Druze believe in the unity of God, and are often known as the "People of Monotheism" or simply "Monotheists".[229] Their theology has a Neo-Platonic view about how God interacts with the world through emanations and is similar to some gnostic and other esoteric sects. Druze philosophy also shows Sufi influences.[230]

Druze principles focus on honesty, loyalty, filial piety, altruism, patriotic sacrifice, and monotheism.[231] They reject nicotine, alcohol, and other drugs and often, the consumption of pork (to the Uqqāl and not necessarily to the Juhhāl).[232] Druze reject polygamy, believe in reincarnation, and are not obliged to observe most of the religious rituals.[233] The Druze believe that rituals are symbolic and have an individualistic effect on the person, for which reason Druze are free to perform them, or not. The community does celebrate Eid al-Adha, however, considered their most significant holiday; though their form of observance is different compared to that of most Muslims.[234]

Culture

A Druze woman preparing a traditional dish

The Druze community maintains Arabic language and culture as core elements of their identity.[18][31][33] Arabic is their primary language, and Druze cultural practices and traditions are deeply intertwined with the broader Arab heritage.[79][235] While the Druze have their unique religious beliefs and customs, they actively preserve and contribute to Arabic cultural and social life in the Levant.[31] They have had a significant impact on the region's history and culture and continue to play a notable political role. [55]

Traditionally, most Druze are not initiated into the deeper secrets of the faith and are considered "juhhāl", or "the ignorant". Only a minority, known as the "uqqāl" or "enlightened", are initiated into the Druze holy books and engage in religious study. The religious life of the average Druze ("juhhāl") revolves around a very small number of events—birth and circumcision, engagement and marriage, death and burial—and is devoid of special Druze prayers or worship.[236] Marriage outside the Druze faith is forbidden,[81] and if a Druze marries a non-Druze, the Druze may be ostracized and marginalized by their community.[237] Because a non-Druze partner cannot convert to Druze faith, the couple cannot have Druze children, because the Druze faith can only be passed on through birth to two Druze parents.[13]

Circumcision is widely practiced by the Druze.[238] The procedure is practiced as a

cultural tradition, and has no religious significance in the Druze faith.[239] There is no special date for this act in the Druze faith: male Druze infants are usually circumcised shortly after birth,[236] however some remain uncircumcised until the age of ten or older.[236] Some Druze do not circumcise their male children, and refuse to observe this "common Muslim practice".[240]

Druze communities are often close-knit and maintain a strong sense of identity and solidarity. A key aspect of their religious practice includes ziyarāt, or visits to holy places. One of the most significant events in Druze religious life is the annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Shu'ayb, observed between 25 and 28 April.[241] This pilgrimage is dedicated to Shu'ayb, whom Druze believe to be a prophet and whose purported tomb is located at this shrine. This event is so important that it is officially recognized as a public holiday in Israel.[241]

Language

The mother tongue of Druze in Syria, Lebanon and Israel is Levantine Arabic,[235] except those born and living in the Druze diaspora such as Venezuela, where Arabic was not taught or spoken at home.[235] The Druze Arabic dialect, especially in the rural areas, is often different from the other regional Arabic dialects.[235] Druze Arabic dialect is distinguished from others by retention of the phoneme /q/, [235] the use of which by Druze is particularly prominent in the mountains and less so in urban areas.

The Druze citizens of Israel are Arabic in language and culture,[18] and linguistically speaking, the majority of them are fluently bilingual, speaking both a Central Northern Levantine Arabic dialect and Hebrew. In Druze Arab homes and towns in Israel, the primary language spoken is Arabic, while some Hebrew words have entered the colloquial Arabic dialect.[242] They often use Hebrew characters to write their Arabic dialect online.[243]

Cultural identity

Inside the Maqam Baha al-Din in Beit Jann

Various scholars agree that the Druze community's cultural identity is deeply intertwined with their Arab heritage. Historian Nejla Abu-Izzedin and Kamal Salibi both argue that the Druze are profoundly embedded within the Arab cultural framework, as demonstrated by their common language and social customs.[244][245] They assert that this integration is apparent through the Druze's active participation in regional traditions and their assimilation into Arab society, despite their distinct religious and philosophical beliefs.[246][247]

Scholar Robert Brenton Betts explains that the Druze social structure is characterized by a strong sense of community and the leadership of religious elders known as 'sheikhs'. These leaders are pivotal in guiding both the spiritual and social aspects of Druze life, which is crucial for preserving their unique identity.[248] Betts also points to specific Druze practices, such as the annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Shu'ayb, as examples of

how these traditions, along with the role of the sheikhs, are deeply ingrained in Druze social life. He argues that these practices are not just religious rituals but are fundamental to reinforcing Druze unity and continuity.[249]

According to some scholars, the Druze cultural identity is shaped by their interactions with both Christian and Muslim communities, reflecting a synthesis of religious and cultural influences. Historians notes that the Druze have historically maintained a positive relationship with Christians, as evidenced by shared traditions and social practices in Mount Lebanon.[250][251] This interaction has led to overlapping symbols, customs, mutual veneration of saints and their shrines, and shared terminology for God.[252][253] Sites such as the Church of Saidet et Tallé in Deir el Qamar, historically a popular Marian pilgrimage site among the Druze, exemplify this cultural exchange.[254] The Druze also venerate Christian saints like Saint George and the Prophet Elijah, admired for their "bravery and warrior-like qualities".[252] Scholar Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire observes that these warrior saints resonate with the Druze due to their parallels with Druze militarized traditions.[252] The baptism of children, in line with Christian tradition, was common among prominent Lebanese Druze families. Historian Aharon Layish notes that there is clear evidence of Druzes in Lebanon during the Ottoman period who posed as Christians for practical reasons.[255]

Conversely, despite sharing historical roots with Muslims, the Druze often experience a more complex relationship with Muslim communities due to their distinct religious beliefs and practices.[251] Historically, the Druze faced significant persecution from Muslim regimes, which led them to keep their religious beliefs secret.[256][257][258] According to Druze narrative, these acts of persecution were aimed at eradicating the entire community.[259][page needed] This narrative has shaped the Druze sense of identity and their awareness of survival.[259][page needed] As a survival strategy, some Druze have historically posed as Muslims, a practice known as *taqiya*. [260] This concealment has led to a synthesis of Druze religious practice and cultural identity with Islamic elements, as noted by scholars.[261]

Cuisine

Druze woman making "Druze pita" (Saj bread) in Isfiya, Israel
Druze cuisine is Arab cuisine,[262] and shares many similarities with other Levantine cuisines. It features a rich array of grains, meat, potato, cheese, bread, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, fresh fish and tomatoes. A hallmark of Druze and Levantine cuisine is meze including tabbouleh, hummus and baba ghanoush. Kibbeh nayyeh is also a popular mezze among the Druze. Other well-known dishes among Druzes include falafel, sfiha, shawarma, dolma, kibbeh, kusa mahshi, shishbarak, muhammara, and mujaddara. Among the popular traditional Arabic dessert by the Druze is Knafeh.[263] In Israel, the Saj bread is known as "Druze Pita" as it was easier for Israeli Jews to identify with Druze than with Arabs.[264] It is a pita filled with labneh (thick yoghurt) and topped with olive oil and za'atar,[265] and a very popular bread in Israel.[266] Al-Meleh a popular dish among Druze in Hauran region (Suwayda Governorate), cooked in a

pressure cooker and served on huge special plates at weddings, holidays, and other special occasions. And consists of bulgur wheat immersed in ghee with lamb and yogurt, and served hot with fried kibbeh and vegetables.[267]

For reasons that remain unclear, the Mulukhiyah dish was banned by the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah sometime during his reign (996–1021). While the ban was eventually lifted after the end of his reign, the Druze, who hold Al-Hakim in high regard and give him quasi-divine authority,[204] continue to respect the ban, and do not eat Mulukhiyah of any kind to this day.[268]

Mate (in Levantine Arabic, *مته* /mæte/) is a popular drink consumed by the Druze brought to the Levant by Syrian migrants from Argentina in the 19th century.[269] Mate is made by steeping dried leaves of the South American yerba mate plant in hot water and is served with a metal straw (*بمبيجة* bambīja or *مصاصة* maṣṣāṣah) from a gourd (*فنجان* finjān or *قَرَّة* qar‘ah). Mate is often the first item served when entering a Druze home. It is a social drink and can be shared between multiple participants. After each drinker, the metal straw is cleaned with lemon rind. Traditional snacks eaten with mate include raisins, nuts, dried figs, biscuits, and chips.[270][269]

Marriage

Israeli Druze family visiting Gamla; wearing religious dress

The Druze rejection of polygamy, in contrast to Islamic tradition, reflects a significant influence from Christianity on their faith.[41] While the Druze cite certain Quranic verses to justify their position, it more closely mirrors the Christian perspective on marriage. [233] Additionally, the practice of monasticism by some Druze sheikhs is highly regarded within their community. It's not uncommon for a sheikh to request celibacy from his fiancée, and many Druze sheikhs remain unmarried throughout their lives.[271] In Druze belief, sex is seen not as an end in itself but as a means of reproduction, with certain sexual forms considered sinful.[271]

The Druze doctrine does not permit outsiders to convert to their religion, as only one who is born to Druze parents can be considered a Druze. Marriage outside the Druze faith is uncommon and strongly discouraged for both males and females. If a Druze individual, whether male or female, marries a non-Druze, they may face ostracism and marginalization from their community.[35] Since a non-Druze partner cannot convert to the Druze faith, the couple cannot have Druze children, as the Druze faith can only be inherited from two Druze parents at birth.[272] Marrying a non-Druze, whether male or female, is viewed as apostasy from the Druze religion.[213] The Druze community holds a negative perception of apostates who marry outside the religion. Consequently, those who leave the Druze religion due to interfaith marriage are forced to leave their village and are exiled to distant, non-Druze areas. This religious and social pressure leads to their isolation and classification as outcasts within their Druze community.[213]

Druze and other religions

Relationship with Muslims

The Druze faith is often classified as a branch of Isma'ilism; although according to various scholars Druze faith "diverges substantially from Islam, both Sunni and Shia".[273][274] Even though the faith originally developed out of Ismaili Islam, most Druze do not identify as Muslims,[275][30][276][277][278][279] and they do not accept the five pillars of Islam.[29] Historian David R. W. Bryer defines the Druzes as ghulat of Isma'ilism, since they exaggerated the cult of the caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah and considered him divine; he also defines the Druzes as a religion that deviated from Islam.[207] He also added that as a result of this deviation, the Druze faith "seems as different from Islam as Islam is from Christianity or Christianity is from Judaism".[208]

Historically the relationship between the Druze and Muslims has been characterized by intense persecution.[280][256][257][258] The Druze have frequently experienced persecution by different Muslim regimes such as the Ismaili Fatimid Caliphate,[68][100] Sunni Mamluk Sultanate,[109] Sunni Ottoman Empire,[281][119] and Egypt Eyalet.[282][283] The persecution of the Druze included massacres, demolishing Druze prayer houses and holy places, and forced conversion to Islam.[284] Those acts of persecution were meant to eradicate the whole community according to the Druze narrative.[259] [page needed] Most recently, the Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, saw persecution of the Druze at the hands of Islamic extremists.[285][286]

Since Druze emerged from Islam and share certain beliefs with Islam, its position of whether it is a separate religion or a sect of Islam is sometimes controversial among Muslim scholars.[287] Druze are not considered Muslims by those belonging to orthodox Islamic schools of thought.[288][289][290][291][292] Ibn Taymiyya, a prominent Muslim scholar muhaddith, dismissed the Druze as non-Muslims,[293] and his fatwa cited that Druze: "Are not at the level of 'Ahl al-Kitāb (People of the Book) nor mushrikin (polytheists). Rather, they are from the most deviant kuffār (Infidel) ... Their women can be taken as slaves and their property can be seized ... they are to be killed whenever they are found and cursed as they described ... It is obligatory to kill their scholars and religious figures so that they do not misguide others",[110] which in that setting would have legitimized violence against them as apostates.[294][295] The Ottoman Empire often relied on Ibn Taymiyya's religious ruling to justify their persecution of Druze.[296] In contrast, according to Ibn Abidin, whose work Radd al-Muhtar 'ala al-Durr al-Mukhtar is still considered the authoritative text of Hanafi fiqh today,[297] the Druze are neither Muslims nor apostates.[298]

In 1959, in an ecumenical move driven by Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser's effort to broaden his political appeal after the establishment of the United Arab Republic between Egypt and Syria in 1958,[299] the Islamic scholar Mahmud Shaltut at Al Azhar University in Cairo classified the Druze as Muslims,[300] even though most Druze no longer consider themselves Muslim.[301][302] The fatwa declares that the Druze are Muslims because they recite the twofold Shahada, and believe in the Qur'an and monotheism and do not oppose Islam in word or deed.[303] This fatwa was not

accepted by all in the Islamic world, many dissenting scholars have argued the Druze recite the Shahada as a form of taqiya; a precautionary dissimulation or denial of religious belief and practice in the face of persecution. Some sects of Islam, including all Shia denominations, don't recognize the religious authority of Al Azhar University, those that do sometimes challenge the religious legitimacy of Shaltut's fatwa because it was issued for political reasons, as Gamal Abdel Nasser saw it as a tool to spread his appeal and influence across the entire Arab world.[304][261]

In 2012, due to a drift towards Salafism in Al-Azhar, and the ascension of the Muslim Brotherhood into Egyptian political leadership, the dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies at Al-Azhar issued a fatwa strongly opposed to the 1959 fatwa.[305]

Shuaib (Jethro) grave near Hittin, Israel: Both religions venerate Shuaib. Both religions venerate Shuaib and Muhammad: Shuaib (Jethro) is revered as the chief prophet in the Druze religion,[306] and in Islam he is considered a prophet of God. Muslims regard Muhammad as the final and paramount prophet sent by God,[307][full citation needed][308] to the Druze, Muhammad is exalted as one of the seven prophets sent by God in different periods of history.[209][210][39]

In terms of religious comparison, Islamic schools and branches do not believe in reincarnation,[48] a paramount tenet of the Druze faith.[191] Islam teaches dawah, whereas the Druze do not accept converts to their faith. Marriage outside the Druze faith is rare and is strongly discouraged. Islamic schools and branches allow for divorce and permit men to be married to multiple women, contrary to the views of the Druze in monogamous marriage and not allowing divorce. Differences between Islamic schools and branches and Druze include their belief in the theophany,[48] Hamza ibn Ali ibn Ahmad is considered the founder of the Druze and the primary author of the Druze manuscripts:[5] he proclaimed that God had become human and taken the form of man, Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah.[202][203][204] Within Islam, however, such a concept of theophany is a denial of monotheism.

The Druze faith incorporates some elements of Islam,[39][40] and other religious beliefs. Druze Sacred texts include the Qur'an and the Epistles of Wisdom (rasail al-hikma رسائل الحكمة)[189] The Druze community does celebrate Eid al-Adha as their most significant holiday; though their form of observance is different compared to that of most Muslims.[234] The Druze faith does not follow Sharia nor any of the Five Pillars of Islam save reciting the Shahada.[260] Scholars argue that Druze recite the Shahada in order to protect their religion and their own safety, and to avoid persecution by Muslims.[260]

Relationship with Christians

Main article: Christianity and Druze

Christian Church and Druze Khalwa in Shuf: Historically; the Druzes and the Christians

in the Shuf Mountains lived in complete harmony.[126] Christianity and Druze are Abrahamic religions that share a historical traditional connection with some major theological differences. The two faiths share a common place of origin in the Middle East and are both monotheistic. The relationship between Druze and Christians has been characterized largely by harmony and peaceful coexistence.[125][126] Amicable relations between the two groups prevailed throughout most of history, though a few exceptions exist, including the 1860 civil conflict in Mount Lebanon and Damascus.[127][page needed][128] Conversion of Druze to Christianity used to be common practice in the Levant region.[309][237] Over the centuries, several prominent members of the Druze community have embraced Christianity,[310][185][186][311] including some of Shihab dynasty members,[312] as well as the Abi-Lamma clan.[313][314]

Christian and Druze communities share a long history of interaction dating back roughly a millennium, particularly in Mount Lebanon.[251] Interaction between Christian communities (members of the Maronites, Eastern Orthodox, Melkite, and other churches) and the Unitarian Druze led to the presence of mixed villages and towns in Mount Lebanon, Chouf,[126] Wadi al-Taym,[98] Jabal al-Druze,[315] the Galilee region, Mount Carmel, and Golan Heights.[316] The Maronite Catholic and the Druze founded modern Lebanon in the early Eighteenth Century, through a governing and social system known as the "Maronite-Druze dualism" in the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate.[139]

Left to right: Christian mountain dweller from Zahlé, Christian mountain dweller of Zgharta, and a Lebanese Druze man in traditional attire (1873).

Druze doctrine teaches that Christianity is to be "esteemed and praised" as the Gospel writers are regarded as "carriers of wisdom".[317] The Druze faith incorporates some elements of Christianity,[39][40] in addition to adoption of Christian elements on the Epistles of Wisdom.[318][41] The full Druze canon or Druze scripture (Epistles of Wisdom) includes the Old Testament,[319] the New Testament,[319] the Quran and philosophical works by Plato and those influenced by Socrates among works from other religions and philosophers.[319] The Druze faith shows influence of Christian monasticism, among other religious practices.[230][41] Some scholars suggest that early Christian Gnostic beliefs might have influenced Druze theology, particularly in concepts of divine knowledge and reincarnation.[41] These influences and incorporations of Christian elements encompass the adoption of the concept of Christianizing al-Mahdi's persona among the Druze, as well as the integration of verses from the Bible concerning the Messiah by certain Druze founders.[41]

In terms of religious comparison, mainstream Christian denominations do not believe in reincarnation or the transmigration of the soul, unlike the Druze.[48] Evangelism is widely seen as central to the Christian faith, unlike the Druze who do not accept converts. Marriage outside the Druze faith is rare and is strongly discouraged. Similarities between the Druze and Christians include commonalities in their view of

monogamous marriage, as well as the forbidding of divorce and remarriage,[48] in addition to the belief in the oneness of God and theophany.[320]

Neither mainstream Christian denominations nor Druze require male circumcision,[321] [239] though male circumcision is commonly practiced in many predominantly Christian countries and many Christian communities,[322] and it is practiced in Coptic Christianity, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church as a rite of passage.[323][324][325][326][327] Male circumcision is also widely practiced by the Druze,[238] but as a cultural tradition, since circumcision has no religious significance in the Druze faith.[239]

The Druze Maqam Al-Masih (Jesus) in Suwayda Governorate: Both religions revere Jesus.[209]

Both faiths give a prominent place to Jesus:[209][210] In Christianity, Jesus is the central figure, seen as the messiah. To the Druze, Jesus is an important prophet of God, [209][210] being among the seven prophets (including Muhammad) who appeared in different periods of history.[328] The Druze revere Jesus "the son of Joseph and Mary" and his four disciples, who wrote the Gospels.[329] According to the Druze manuscripts Jesus is the Greatest Imam and the incarnation of Ultimate Reason (Akl) on earth and the first cosmic principle (Hadd),[329][218] and regards Jesus and Hamza ibn Ali as the incarnations of one of the five great celestial powers, who form part of their system.[330] In the Druze tradition, Jesus is known under three titles: the True Messiah (al-Masih al-Haq), the Messiah of all Nations (Masih al-Umam), and the Messiah of Sinners. This is due, respectively, to the belief that Jesus delivered the true Gospel message, the belief that he was the Saviour of all nations, and the belief that he offers forgiveness.[331]

Both religions venerate the Virgin Mary,[332] John the Baptist,[211][333] Saint George, [334] Elijah,[211] Luke the Evangelist,[53] Job and other common figures.[53] Figures in the Old Testament such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jethro are considered important prophets of God in the Druze faith, being among the seven prophets who appeared in different periods of history.[209][210]

Relationship with Jews

Maqam Al-Khidr in Kafr Yasif

The relationship between the Druze and Jews has been controversial,[335] Antisemitic material is contained in the Druze literature such as the Epistles of Wisdom; for example in an epistle ascribed to one of the founders of Druze, Baha al-Din al-Muqtana,[336] probably written sometime between AD 1027 and AD 1042, accused the Jews of crucifying Jesus.[337] In other epistles, Jews are depicted negatively as "morally corrupt and murderers of prophets", particularly in chapters 13–14 of the Epistles of Wisdom. [338] The epistle "Excuses and Warnings" predicts that, as a sign of the end times, Jews will seize control of Jerusalem and seek revenge on its inhabitants as well as those of Acre. Afterwards, Messiah Jesus will expel the Jews from Jerusalem due to their spread

of moral corruption worldwide. Christians will then dominate Muslims until the Day of Judgment, when divine judgment by Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah will occur.[338][339]

On the other hand, Benjamin of Tudela, a Jewish traveler[340][better source needed] from the 12th century, pointed out that the Druze maintained good commercial relations with the Jews nearby, and according to him this was because the Druze liked the Jewish people.[341] Yet, the Jews and Druze lived isolated from each other, except in a few mixed towns such as Deir al-Qamar and Peki'in.[341][342] The Deir el Qamar Synagogue was built in 1638, during the Ottoman era in Lebanon, to serve the local Jewish population, some of whom were part of the immediate entourage of the Druze Emir Fakhr-al-Din II.[citation needed]

During the Ottoman period, relations between the Druze of Galilee and the Jewish community were generally strained and marked by conflict.[343] In 1660, during a Druze power struggle in Mount Lebanon, Druze forces destroyed Jewish settlements in the Galilee, including Safad and Tiberias.[344][345] The tension escalated in 1834 during the Peasants' Revolt, when Safed's Jewish community endured a month-long assault that involved extensive looting, violence, and the destruction of Jewish properties by both Druze and Muslims.[346] During the Druze revolt against the rule of Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt, the Jewish community in Safad was attacked by Druze rebels in early July 1838, the violence against the Jews included plundering their homes and desecrating their synagogues.[347][348][349]

Oliphant house in Daliyat al-Karmel

Interactions between Jews and Druze were rare before the establishment of Israel in 1948, as they historically lived isolated from each other.[342][350] During the British Mandate for Palestine, the Druze did not embrace the rising Arab nationalism of the time or participate in violent confrontations with Jewish immigrants. In 1948, many Druze volunteered for the Israeli army and no Druze villages were destroyed or permanently abandoned.[351] Since the establishment of the state of Israel, the Druze have demonstrated solidarity with Israel and distanced themselves from Arab Islamic radicalism.[352] Israeli Druze male citizens serve in the Israel Defense Forces.[353] The Jewish-Druze partnership was often referred as "a covenant of blood" (Hebrew: ברית דמים, brit damim) in recognition of the common military yoke carried by the two peoples for the security of the country.[354][337][355] Israeli Druze scholars Kais M. Firro and Rabah Halabi contend that the Israeli narrative of a "special historical bond" or "blood pact" between Druze and Jews is a myth fabricated by early Zionist circles to divide and control Arab religious communities in Israel, with no historical foundation.[65][66] Conversely, the Druze community in Syria, Lebanon, and the Golan Heights generally aligns with Arab nationalism and holds predominantly anti-Zionist views.[356]

From 1957, the Israeli government formally recognized the Druze as a separate religious community,[357] and they are defined as a distinct ethnic group in the Israeli Ministry of

Interior's census registration.[357] Israeli Druze do not consider themselves Muslim, and see their faith as a separate and independent religion.[357] While compared to other Israeli Christians and Muslims, Druze place less emphasis on their Arab identity and self-identify more as Israeli. However, they were less ready for personal relationships with Jews compared to Israeli Muslims and Christians.[358] Scholars attribute this trend to cultural differences between Jews and Druze.[359]

In terms of religious comparison, scholars consider Judaism and the Druze faith as ethnoreligious groups,[26] both practicing endogamy,[25] and both typically do not proselytize. Belief in reincarnation (Gilgul) exist in some strands of Judaism influenced by the Kabbalah, such as Hasidic Judaism, but is rejected by mainstream Jewish denominations (Reform Judaism, Conservative Judaism and Orthodox Judaism).[360] Figures in the Hebrew Bible such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses are considered important prophets of God in the Druze faith, being among the seven prophets who appeared in different periods of history.[209][210] Both religions venerate Elijah,[211] Job and other common figures. In the Hebrew Bible, Jethro was Moses' father-in-law, a Kenite shepherd and priest of Midian.[361] Jethro of Midian is considered an ancestor of the Druze who revere him as their spiritual founder and chief prophet.

Origins

Ethnic origins

A Druze family of the Lebanon, late 1800s

A study carried out by the Israeli Druze historian Kais M. Firro examines various theories about the origins of the Druze, including possible connections to the Arameans, Arabs, Itureans, Cuthites, Hivites, Armenians, Persians, and Turks. Some suggested a European origin.[362] In the 17th century, there was a prevailing belief in France that the Druze were descendants of a lost army of European Christian crusaders.[363] According to this notion, after the fall of the Christian stronghold of Acre in 1291 and the subsequent persecution by the victorious Mamluks, these crusaders sought refuge in the mountains of Lebanon and settled there permanently.[363]

According to Firro, two main approaches have been used to trace Druze origins. The first examines religious texts and the ethnic backgrounds of the early Druze leaders. The second focuses on the migration and settlement patterns of ancient peoples and tribes in the Druze regions before the 11th century. The third approach relies on anthropometric studies.[362]

The main proponent of the first approach is historian Philip Hitti, whose theory is a key reference for tracing Druze origins.[364] Hitti proposed that the Druze are a blend of Persians, Iraqis, and Persianized Arabs who adopted new beliefs. He supported this with three arguments: first, the early founders and disseminators of the Druze religion were of Persians origin; second, some of the Druze religious lexicon is Persian; and third, the native inhabitants of Wadi al-Taym where Druze faith beliefs first spread, were influenced by Persian and Iraqi or Persianized Arab cultures before 1077.[364] However,

Martin Sprengling criticized Hitti's theory, arguing that not all early Druze leaders were of Persian origin—citing Baha al-Din al-Muqtana as an example of Arab origin. Sprengling also noted that Wadi al-Taym's inhabitants before 1077 were mostly pure Arab tribes such as the Tanukhids and Taym Allah tribe.[364] He concluded that the Druze are mainly a combination of various ethnic groups, with a major influence from Arabs, particularly southern Arabs, along with an indigenous mountain population of Aramaic origin.[60][365] Additionally, Two English researchers, Gertrude Bell and David Hogarth, also proposed that the Druze are a blend of Arabs from Southern Arabia and the mountain-dwelling Aramaeans.[61]

A photograph from 1938 depicting Druze people from Kanawat in Jabal Druze (Hauran), dressed in their traditional clothing

The second approach, used by Druze historians, scholars, intellectuals and clerics, emphasizes the migration and settlement of Arab tribes to highlight the pure Arab lineage of those who adopted Druze beliefs in the 11th century.[60] Proponents argue that the Druze speak a "pure Arab dialect" and are of "pure Arab blood", not mixed with Turkish or other influences, due to their practice of strict endogamy marriage.[60] This view maintains that most Druze are descended from 12 Arab tribes that migrated to Syria before the Islamic period.[60] It relies on historical records, Druze chronicles, and genealogical trees reconstructed by Druze families to trace their ancestry and settlement in Syria.[60] According to Firro, all Druze historians, scholars and leaders in Lebanon and Syria consider the Druze to be Arabs, and this view is accepted by the entire Druze community in those countries.[67] In contrast, while most Druze in Israel consider themselves Arabs, some Israeli Druze politicians have begun to reject the idea of Arabic racial origin as a component of Druze national identity for political reasons.[67]

According to Firro, the third approach in the research on Druze origins is based on the conclusions of researchers and anthropologists. Studies by Felix von Luschan, Arries and Kappers found that Druze in the Levant, along with their Muslim and Christian counterparts, share the same origins.[60] Similarly, Druze historian Nejla Abu-Izzedin has concluded that Druze, Christians, and Muslims in the Levant have the same racial background.[60]

According to Druze historian Amin Talea', Druze oral and written traditions recount that twelve Arab tribes converted to Islam and fought alongside Muslim warriors until they were introduced to the Druze religion by preachers sent from Egypt by the Fatimid caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah. Talea' adds that, over time, the Druze developed a strong sense of their pure Arab origins, believing that, apart from their unique religious practices, their spiritual and material culture closely mirrored that of the broader population of Greater Syria.[366]

Arabian hypothesis

Map of the Buhturid domains in Mount Lebanon under Mamluk rule, with the Buhturids,

a Tanukh clan, holding a significant place in Druze history.[367]

The Druze faith extended to many areas in the Middle East, but most of the modern Druze can trace their origin to the Wadi al-Taym in Southern Lebanon, which is named after an Arab tribe Taym Allah (or Taym Allat) which, according to Islamic historian al-Tabari, first came from the Arabian Peninsula into the valley of the Euphrates where they had been Christianized prior to their migration into Lebanon. Many of the Druze feudal families, whose genealogies have been preserved by the two modern Syrian chroniclers Haydar al-Shihabi and Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, seem also to point in the direction of this origin. Arabian tribes emigrated via the Persian Gulf and stopped in Iraq on their route that would later lead them to Syria. The first feudal Druze family, the Tanukhids, which made for itself a name in fighting the Crusaders was, according to Haydar al-Shihabi, an Arab tribe from Mesopotamia where it occupied the position of a ruling family and apparently was Christianized.[109][page needed]

Travelers like Niebuhr, and scholars like Max von Oppenheim, undoubtedly echoing the popular Druze belief regarding their own origin, have classified them as Arabs.[61]

The Arabian hypothesis is widely regarded as the leading explanation for the origins of the Druze people among historians, scholars, intellectuals, and religious leaders within the Druze community.[32] This theory suggests that the Druze descended from twelve Arab tribes that migrated to Syria before and during the early Islamic period.[60][61][62] It also serves as the primary framework for understanding their historical and racial origins, as reflected in their oral traditions and written literature. This hypothesis is central to the Druze's self-perception and cultural identity.[31] This view is accepted by the entire Druze community in Syria and Lebanon, as well as by most Druze in Israel. [67] The Arabic language is spoken by the Druze and is also the language in which their sacred texts are written. Scholars who hold this view argue that this linguistic connection underscores the Druze's ethnic Arab identity.

According to Druze historian Nejla Abu-Izzedin, the Druze people are of Arab origin, both culturally and historically.[31] She explains that Druze traditions and narratives consistently trace their roots to Arab tribes who settled in Syria, some prior to the advent of Islam and others during the Muslim conquest.[61] Abu-Izzedin further notes that when the Druze community was established, its members were spread across a wide area of Syria. The majority of those who embraced the Druze faith were Arab tribes from the northern region, making the Arab elements of the community predominant.[367]

According to Abu-Izzedin, "ethnically", the "Wadi al-Taym has been authoritatively stated to be one of the most Arab regions of [geographical] Syria".[368] The area was one of the two most important centers of Druze missionary activity in the 11th century.[368]

Additionally, Abu-Izzedin highlights that the Tanukhids, an Arab tribe, hold a significant place in Druze history.[367] She asserts that the Druze claims of Arab origin were not driven by self-interest, as Arabs were no longer in a dominant position when the Druze community was founded in the 11th century.[369] Furthermore, Druze narratives recount their involvement in pivotal events in Arab history.[31] In modern times, the Druze have

largely adopted Arab nationalism and played a notable role in the Great Syrian Revolt of 1920's.[31]

Druze scholar Sami Makarem notes that Wadi Taym and southern Lebanon (Jabal Amel) were pivotal centers for Druze missionary activity in the 11th century, inhabited by Arab tribes.[62] He explains that Druze oral traditions and religious documents suggest that most Druze ancestors came from twelve Arab tribes in Maarat al-Numan during the early period of Islam and its conquests. Later, they migrated and settled in Lebanon.[62] Makarem highlights the Druze's strong Arab heritage, noting that early Druze followers were predominantly of Arab descent.[62] He also points out that many tribes settling in the Levant before Islam came from southern Arabia, including Yamani and Qaysi tribes. According to Makarem, Druze belief links their ancestry to tribes that lived in [geographical] Syria, some before Islam and others arriving during the conquest.[62]

Israeli Druze historian Salman Hamud Fallah asserted that the Druze people of today originated from the Arabian Peninsula. He noted that some of their ancestors came from the northern part of the peninsula, while others came from the southern region, specifically Yemen.[370] In addition, Israeli Druze historian Yusri Hazran describes the Druze narrative, which holds that twelve Arab tribes migrated into the Syrian region either before the rise of Islam or during the early Islamic period. These tribes were predominantly of Yamani tribes, with the Tanukhids being the most dominant among them. Subsequently, these tribes adopted the Druze doctrine. Hazran affirms that this narrative is recognized within Druze doctrine and its scriptures.[371][372]

Druze researchers and historians from Israel, such as Kais M. Firro, Rabah Halabi, Munir Fakhr El-Din, and Afifa E. Kheir, confirm that the Druze are Arabs and note that this was not a contentious issue in Israel before 1962.[67][65][373] Halabi observes that Israeli policies aimed at granting the Druze a distinct community status and political identity led some Druze to see this separate "Druze-Israeli identity" as an ethnic marker for social integration within Israeli society.[66] Firro argues that efforts to create a separate Druze identity distinct from Arabs are politically motivated and lack historical basis, citing Druze religious and historical literature that affirms their Arab heritage.[374] Scholar Michael Cohen adds that, despite the Israeli and Zionist narrative promoting a distinct "Druze ethnic identity", most Druze in Israel view their origins as Arab and consider their Druze identity primarily as religious.[375]

Druze as a mixture of Western Asian tribes

The 1911 edition of Encyclopædia Britannica states that the Druze are "a mixture of refugee stocks, in which the Arab largely predominates, grafted on to an original mountain population of Aramaic blood".[70]

Iturean hypothesis

According to Jewish contemporary literature, the Druze, who were visited and described in 1165 by Benjamin of Tudela, were pictured as descendants of the Itureans,[376] an Ismaelite Arab tribe, which used to reside in the northern parts of the Golan plateau

through Hellenistic and Roman periods. The word Druzes, in an early Hebrew edition of his travels, occurs as Dogziyin, but it is clear that this is a scribal error.

Archaeological assessments of the Druze region have also proposed the possibility of Druze descending from Itureans,[377] who had inhabited Mount Lebanon and Golan Heights in late classic antiquity, but their traces fade in the Middle Ages.

Genetics

See also: Genetic history of the Middle East

Lebanese Christians and Druze became a genetic isolate in the predominantly Islamic world.[378]

In a 2005 study of ASPM gene variants, Mekel-Bobrov et al. found that the Israeli Druze people of the Mount Carmel region have among the highest rate of the newly evolved ASPM- Haplogroup D, at 52.2% occurrence of the approximately 6,000-year-old allele. [379] While it is not yet known exactly what selective advantage is provided by this gene variant, the Haplogroup D allele is thought[by whom?] to be positively selected in populations and to confer some substantial advantage that has caused its frequency to rapidly increase.

A 2004 DNA study has shown that Israeli Druze are remarkable for the high frequency (35%) of males who carry the Y-chromosomal haplogroup L, which is otherwise uncommon in the Middle East (Shen et al. 2004).[380] This haplogroup originates from prehistoric South Asia and has spread from Pakistan into southern Iran. A 2008 study done on larger samples showed that L-M20 averages 27% in Mount Carmel Druze, 2% in Galilee Druze, 8% in Lebanese Druze, and it was not found in a sample of 59 Syrian Druze (Slush et al. 2008).[381]

Cruciani, in 2007, found E1b1b1a2 (E-V13) [a subclade of E1b1b1a (E-M78)] in high levels (>10% of the male population) in Cypriot and Druze lineages. Recent genetic clustering analyses of ethnic groups are consistent with the close ancestral relationship between the Druze and Cypriots, and also identified similarity to the general Syrian and Lebanese populations, as well as the major Jewish divisions (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Iraqi, and Moroccan Jews) (Behar et al. 2010).[382]

Also, a new study concluded that the Druze harbor a remarkable diversity of mitochondrial DNA lineages that appear to have separated from each other thousands of years ago. But instead of dispersing throughout the world after their separation, the full range of lineages can still be found within the Druze population.[383]

The researchers noted that the Druze villages contained a striking range of high frequency and high diversity of the X haplogroup, suggesting that this population provides a glimpse into the past genetic landscape of the Near East at a time when the X haplogroup was more prevalent.[383]

These findings are consistent with the Druze oral tradition that claims that the adherents of the faith came from diverse ancestral lineages stretching back tens of thousands of years.[383] The Shroud of Turin analysis shows significant traces of mitochondrial DNA unique to the Druze community.[384]

A 2008 study published on the genetic background of Druze communities in Israel showed highly heterogeneous parental origins. A total of 311 Israeli Druze were sampled: 37 from the Golan Heights, 183 from the Galilee, and 35 from Mount Carmel, as well as 27 Druze immigrants from Syria and 29 from Lebanon (Slush et al. 2008). The researchers found the following frequencies of Y-chromosomal and MtDNA haplogroups:[381]

Mount Carmel: L 27%, R 27%, J 18%, E 15%, G 12%.

Galilee: J 31%, R 20%, E 18%, G 14%, K 11%, Q 4%, L 2%.

Golan Heights: J 54%, E 29%, I 8%, G 4%, C 4%.

Lebanon: J 58%, K 17%, Q 8%, R 8%, L 8%.

Syria: J 39%, E 29%, R 14%, G 14%, K 4%.

Maternal MtDNA haplogroup frequencies: H 32%, X 13%, K 12.5%, U 10%, T 7.5%, HV 4.8%, J 4.8%, I 3.5%, pre HV 3%, L2a3 2.25%, N1b 2.25%, M1 1.6%, W 1.29%.

In a principal component analysis of a 2014 study, Druze were located between Lebanese people and Mizrahi Jews.[385]

According to a 2015 study, Druze have a largely similar genome with Middle Eastern Arabs, but they have not married outside of their clans in 1000 years and Druze families from different regions share a similarity with each other that distinguishes them from other Middle Eastern populations.[386]

A 2016 study based on testing samples of Druze in the historic region of Syria, in comparison with ancient humans (including Anatolian and Armenian), and on Geographic Population Structure (GPS) tool by converting genetic distances into geographic distances, concluded that Druze might hail from the Zagros Mountains and the surroundings of Lake Van in eastern Anatolia, then they later migrated south to settle in the mountainous regions in Syria, Lebanon and Israel.[387]

A 2020 study on remains from Canaanite (Bronze Age southern Levantine) populations suggests a significant degree of genetic continuity in currently Arabic-speaking Levantine populations (including the Druze, Lebanese, Palestinians, and Syrians), as well as in most Jewish groups (including Sephardi Jews, Ashkenazi Jews, Mizrahi Jews, and Maghrebi Jews) from the populations of the Bronze Age Levant, suggesting that the aforementioned groups all derive more than half of their overall ancestry (atDNA) from Canaanite / Bronze Age Levantine populations,[388][389] albeit with varying sources and degrees of admixture from differing host or invading populations depending on each group.

Principal component analysis of some ancient and modern populations, including Druze (Almarri, Mohamed A. et al. 2021).

In a 2021 study, Druze were a part of the larger Levant-Iraq cluster in a fineSTRUCTURE tree analysis, and overlapped with Lebanese people in a principal component analysis.[390]

See also

Sword Battalion

Jaysh al-Muwahhidin

Jabal Druze State

List of Druze

Gnosticism and Neoplatonism

Religious syncretism

Christianity and Druze

Notes

Excludes the Golan Heights, which is illegally occupied by Israel under international law.

/druːz/ DROOZ; Arabic: دَرْزِيّ, darzī or دُرْزِيّ durzī, pl. دُرُوز, durūz

In 1962, Israel redefined the Druze's ethnic identity from "Arab" to "Druze" on official documents, creating a distinct political and national identity and establishing a separate education system to foster a "Druze and Israeli" consciousness. This initiative aimed to counteract "Arabization" and "Palestinianization", resulted in an independent Druze curriculum. While most Druze in Israel continue to identify as Arabs, some have adopted a distinct "Druze ethnic identity" for political or social reasons. Scholars argue that this policy, supported by a co-opted Druze political elite, privileges the Druze's communal aspects while marginalizing their broader ethnic and national identity.[63][64][65][66]

The Fātimid caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah became a central figure in the Druze faith,[82] although his religious position was disputed among scholars.[citation needed] John Esposito states that al-Hakim believed that "he was not only the divinely appointed religio-political leader, but also the cosmic intellect linking God with creation",[88] while others like Nissīm Dānā and Mordechai Nisan state that he is perceived as the manifestation and the reincarnation of God or presumably the image of God.[citation needed]

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Remove ye the causes of fear and estrangement from yourselves. Do away with the corruption of delusion and conformity. Be ye certain that the Prince of Believers hath given unto you free will, and hath spared you the trouble of disguising and concealing your true beliefs, so that when ye work ye may keep your deeds pure for God. He hath done thus so that when you relinquish your previous beliefs and doctrines ye shall not indeed lean on such causes of impediments and pretensions. By conveying to you the reality of his intention, the Prince of Believers hath spared you any excuse for doing so. He hath urged you to declare your belief openly. Ye are now safe from any hand which may bring harm unto you. Ye now may find rest in his assurance ye shall not be wronged. Let those who are present convey this message unto the absent so that it may be known by both the distinguished and the common people. It shall thus become a rule to mankind; and Divine Wisdom shall prevail for all the days to come.

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Poonawala 1999, p. 542.

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Bryer, David R. W. (1975). "The Origins of the Druze Religion". *Der Islam*. 52 (1): 52–65. doi:10.1515/islam.1975.52.1.47. ISSN 1613-0928. S2CID 201807131.

Bryer, David R. W. (1975). "The Origins of the Druze Religion (Fortsetzung)". *Der Islam*. 52 (2): 239–262. doi:10.1515/islam.1975.52.2.239. ISSN 1613-0928. S2CID 162363556.

Hitti, Philip K. (1928). *The Origins of the Druze People and Religion: With Extracts from Their Sacred Writings*. Library of Alexandria. p. 37. ISBN 978-1-4655-4662-3.

Dānā 2008, p. 17.

Swayd 2015, p. 7.

Dana 2010, p. 314.

Daftary 2007, p. 189.

Clarke, Morgan (2013). *Islam And New Kinship: Reproductive Technology and the Shariah in Lebanon*. Berghahn Books. p. 17. ISBN 978-0-85745-382-2.

Swayd 2009, pp. 44, 61, 147.

Schmermund, Elizabeth (2017). *Lebanon: Cultures of the World* (3rd ed.). Cavendish Square Publishing, LLC. p. 87. ISBN 978-1-5026-2612-7. While the Druze do not permit iconography in their religion, they have a religious symbol known as the Druze Star

Stewart, Dona J. (2008). *The Middle East Today: Political, Geographical and Cultural Perspectives*. Routledge. ISBN 978-1-135-98078-8. The Druze symbol is a five colored star, with each color representing cosmic principles believed by the Druze

Massignon, Louis (2019). *The Passion of Al-Hallaj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam*. Vol. 1: *The Life of Al-Hallaj*. Princeton University Press. p. 594. ISBN 978-0-691-61083-2.

Swayd 2015, p. 8.

Swayd 2015, p. 8: "The five colors that form the Druze flag and five-pointed star are religious symbols of the luminaries."

"Holy places of the Druze". Aamama.

Kais Firro (1999). *The Druzes in the Jewish State: A Brief History*. Brill. p. 95. ISBN 90-04-11251-0.

"Khalwah the prayer place of the Druze". Druze sect site. 29 August 2010. Archived from the original on 3 December 2013.

Raudvere, Catharina (2005). *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives*. Routledge. p. 163. ISBN 978-1-135-79725-6.

"Druze | History, Religion, & Facts". Encyclopedia Britannica. 12 May 2023.

Kellner-Heikele, Barbara (2018). *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East: Collected Papers of the International Symposium "Alevism in Turkey and Comparable Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East in the Past and Present"*, Berlin, 14–17 April 1995. Brill. p. 230. ISBN 978-90-04-37898-8.

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Vloeberghs, Ward (2015). *Architecture, Power and Religion in Lebanon: Rafiq Hariri and the Politics of Sacred Space in Beirut*. Brill. p. 285. ISBN 978-90-04-30705-6.

Lampros-Monroe, Chloe (2014). *A Darkling Plain*. Cambridge University Press. p. 231. ISBN 978-1-107-03499-0.

Stanton, Andrea L. (2012). *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa: An Encyclopedia*. SAGE Publications. p. 330. ISBN 978-1-4129-8176-7.

L. Torstrick, Rebecca (2004). *Culture and Customs of Israel*. Greenwood Publishing Group. p. 48. ISBN 978-0-313-32091-0.

R. Williams, Victoria (2020). *Indigenous Peoples: An Encyclopedia of Culture, History, and Threats to Survival* [4 volumes]. ABC-CLIO. p. 318. ISBN 978-1-4408-6118-5.

Lesch, David W. (2021). *Historical Dictionary of Syria*. Rowman & Littlefield. p. 129. ISBN 978-1-5381-2286-0.

"Eid al-Adha celebrated differently by Druze, Alawites". Aw.

Swayd 2006, p. 50.

Dānā 2003, p. 56.

"Refugee Review Tribunal: What is the attitude of the Druze community toward inter-

religious marriages?" (PDF). Refworld. 6 June 2006.

Ubayd, Anis (2006). *The Druze and Their Faith in Tawhid*. Syracuse University Press. p. 150. ISBN 978-0-8156-3097-5. Male circumcision is standard practice, by tradition, among the Druze

Jacobs, Daniel (1998). *Israel and the Palestinian Territories: The Rough Guide*. Rough Guides. p. 147. ISBN 978-1-85828-248-0. Circumcision is not compulsory and has no religious significance.

Betts, Robert Brenton (2013). *The Sunni-Shi'a Divide: Islam's Internal Divisions and Their Global Consequences*. Potomac Books, Inc. p. 56. ISBN 978-1-61234-523-9.

There are many references to the Druze refusal to observe this common Muslim practice, one of the earliest being the rediscoverer of the ruins of Petra, John Burckhardt. "The Druses do not circumcise their children

Firro 2023, p. 95.

Dr. Dekel, N., Prof. Brosh, H. *Languages in Contact: Preliminary Clues on an Emergence of an Israeli Arabic Variety*. June 2013.

Gaash, Amir (2016). "Colloquial Arabic written in Hebrew characters on Israeli websites by Druzes (and other non-Jews)". *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* (43–44): 15.

Abu-Izzeddin 1993, p. 45-67.

Salibi, K. (1988). *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. University of California Press. pp. 25–50. ISBN 978-0-520-07196-4.

Abu-Izzeddin 1993, p. 145.

Salibi, Kamal (1988). *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. University of California Press. pp. 85–110. ISBN 978-0-520-07196-4.

Betts 1990, p. 92.

Betts 1990, pp. 85–110.

Hitti, Philip (2010). *Lebanon in History: From the Earliest Times to the Present*. University of Michigan Press. pp. 408–410. ISBN 978-90-04-12938-2.

Mackey, Sandra (2006). *Lebanon: A House Divided*. W. W. Norton. p. 62. ISBN 978-0-393-35276-4.

Beaurepaire, Pierre-Yves (2017). *Religious Interactions in Europe and the Mediterranean World: Coexistence and Dialogue from the 12th to the 20th Centuries*. Taylor & Francis. pp. 310–314. ISBN 978-1-351-72217-9.

Munro, Dane; Haddad, Nour Fara (2019). *Peace Journeys: A New Direction in Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. p. 7. ISBN 978-1-5275-4313-3.

Bowman, Glenn (2012). *Sharing the Sacra: The Politics and Pragmatics of Intercommunal Relations Around Holy Places*. Berghahn Books. p. 17. ISBN 978-0-85745-486-7.

Genzor, Jozef (1990). *Asian and African Studies: Vol. 19, No. 3*. University of Michigan Press. p. 274. ISBN 978-0-7007-0226-8.

Swayd 2015, p. 132: "Some Muslim rulers and jurists have advocated the persecution of members of the Druze Movement beginning with the seventh Fatimi Caliph Al-Zahir, in 1022. Recurring period of persecutions in subsequent centuries ... failure to elucidate their beliefs and practices, have contributed to the ambiguous relationship between Muslims and Druzes"

Zartman, Jonathan K. (2020). *Conflict in the Modern Middle East: An Encyclopedia of Civil War, Revolutions, and Regime Change*. ABC-CLIO. p. 199. ISBN 978-1-4408-6503-9. Historically, Islam classified Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians as protected "People of the Book," a secondary status subject to payment of a poll tax. Nevertheless, Zoroastrians suffered significant persecution. Other religions such as the Alawites, Alevis, and Druze often suffered more.

Layīš, Aharôn (1982). *Marriage, Divorce, and Succession in the Druze Family: A Study Based on Decisions of Druze Arbitrators and Religious Courts in Israel and the Golan Heights*. Brill. p. 1. ISBN 978-90-04-06412-6. the Druze religion, though originating from the Isma'iliyya, an extreme branch of the Shia, seceded completely from Islam and has, therefore, experienced periods of persecution by the latter.

Zabad 2017.

Lewis, James (2002). *The Encyclopedia of Cults, Sects, and New Religions*. Prometheus Books. Retrieved 13 May 2015.

Keddie, Nikki R.; Matthee, Rudolph P. (2002). *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics* (illustrated ed.). University of Washington Press. p. 306. ISBN 978-0-295-98206-9.

Kessler, Dana (15 November 2019). "A Taste of Druze Cuisine". *Tablet Magazine*.

Ashkenazi, Michael (2020). *Food Cultures of Israel: Recipes, Customs, and Issues*. ABC-CLIO. p. XXIII. ISBN 978-1-4408-6686-9.

Vered, Ronit (20 November 2022). "In Israel, a Druze and a Jew Bond Over a Shared Tradition: Syrian Coo..." *Haaretz*. Retrieved 10 August 2024.

Isalska, Anita (2018). *Lonely Planet Israel & the Palestinian Territories*. Lonely Planet. p. 5. ISBN 978-1-78701-924-9.

"A Taste of Druze Cuisine". *Tabletmag*. 20 November 2019.

Aryain, Ed (2006). *From Syria to Seminole: Memoir of a High Plains Merchant*. Texas Tech University Press. p. 213. ISBN 978-0-89672-586-7.

Williams, Victoria R. (2020). *Indigenous Peoples: An Encyclopedia of Culture, History, and Threats to Survival* [4 volumes]. ABC-CLIO. p. 318. ISBN 978-1-4408-6118-5.

"South American 'mate' tea a long-time Lebanese hit". *Middle East Online*. 22 March 2018. Archived from the original on 12 March 2014. Retrieved 11 March 2014.

Barceloux, Donald (2012). *Medical Toxicology of Drug Abuse: Synthesized Chemicals and Psychoactive Plants*. John Wiley & Sons. ISBN 978-1-118-10605-1.

Dānā 2003, p. 60.

Bessonov, Ania (18 November 2018). "Dating Druze: The struggle to find love in a dwindling diaspora". *CBC News*. Retrieved 1 May 2019.

Zaman, Muhammad Qasim; Stewart, Devin J.; Mirza, Mahan; Kadi, Wadad; Crone, Patricia; Gerhard, Bowering; Hefner, Robert W.; Fahmy, Khaled; Kuran, Timur (2013). *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*. Princeton University Press. pp. 139–140. ISBN 978-0-691-13484-0. Druze who survive as a small minority in Syria, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan (their estimated number in these countries totaled around one million in the beginning of the 21st century) diverge substantially from Islam, both Sunni and Shī'a.

Bryer, David R. W. (1979). *The Origins of the Druze Religion: An Edition of Ḥamza's Writings and an Analysis of His Doctrine*. University of Oxford Press. p. 239. ISBN 978-

0-03-052596-4.

"Are the Druze People Arabs or Muslims? Deciphering Who They Are". Arab America. 8 August 2018. Retrieved 13 April 2020.

Yazbeck Haddad, Yvonne (2014). *The Oxford Handbook of American Islam*. Oxford University Press. p. 142. ISBN 978-0-19-986263-4. While they appear parallel to those of normative Islam, in the Druze religion they are different in meaning and interpretation. The religion is considered distinct from the Ismaili as well as from other Muslims belief and practice... Most Druze consider themselves fully assimilated in American society and do not necessarily identify as Muslims..

Cohen, Hillel (2010). *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs, 1948–1967*. University of California Press. p. 170. ISBN 978-0-520-94488-6. the Druze connection to the Muslims remained a matter of controversy.

Jacobs, Martin (2014). *Reorienting the East: Jewish Travelers to the Medieval Muslim World*. University of Pennsylvania Press. p. 193. ISBN 978-0-8122-9001-1. Though their religion is related to that of the Ismailis from a historical standpoint, the Druze—who see themselves as true "unitarians" (muwah.h.idūn)—are usually not considered Muslims.

Hajjar, Lisa (2005). *Courting Conflict: The Israeli Military Court System in the West Bank and Gaza*. University of California Press. p. 279. ISBN 978-0-520-24194-7. [Druze] although today it is widely considered to be a separate religion, some still consider it an Islamic sect

Artzi 1984, p. 166: "...Europeans who visited the area during this period related that the Druze "love the Christians more than the other believers," and that they "hate the Turks, the Muslims and the Arabs [Bedouin] with an intense hatred."

Tucker 2019, pp. 364–366.

Fawaz 1994, p. 63.

Goren, Haim. *Dead Sea Level: Science, Exploration and Imperial Interests in the Near East*. pp. 95–96.

Tucker 2019, p. 364.

"Syria conflict: Al-Nusra fighters kill Druze villagers". BBC News. 11 June 2015. Retrieved 27 July 2015.

"Nusra Front kills Syrian villagers from minority Druze sect". thestar.com. 11 June 2015. Retrieved 27 July 2015.

Firro, Kais M. (2021). *The Druzes in the Jewish State: A Brief History*. Brill. p. 94. ISBN 978-90-04-49191-5.

Hunter, Shireen (2010). *The Politics of Islamic Revivalism: Diversity and Unity*. Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, D.C.), Georgetown University. Center for Strategic and International Studies. University of Michigan Press. p. 33. ISBN 978-0-253-34549-3. Druze – An offshoot of Shi'ism; its members are not considered Muslims by orthodox Muslims.

Grafton, David D. (2009). *Piety, Politics, and Power: Lutherans Encountering Islam in the Middle East*. Wipf and Stock Publishers. p. 14. ISBN 978-1-63087-718-7. In addition, there are several quasi-Muslim sects, in that, although they follow many of the beliefs and practices of orthodox Islam, the majority of Sunnis consider them heretical. These would be the Ahmadiyya, Druze, Ibadi, and the Yazidis.

Williams, Victoria R. (2020). *Indigenous Peoples: An Encyclopedia of Culture, History,*

and Threats to Survival [4 volumes]. ABC-CLIO. p. 318. ISBN 978-1-4408-6118-5. As Druze is a nonritualistic religion without requirements to pray, fast, make pilgrimages, or observe days of rest, the Druze are not considered an Islamic people by Sunni Muslims. "Allah has spoken to us: we must keep silent.' In the folds of secrecy, the Holy Book of the Druze". Aix-Marseille University. 30 January 2017. Orientalist literature frequently affiliates the Druze religion with the Muslim faith, although it seems as different from Islam as Islam is from Christianity or Christianity is from Judaism (Bryer 1975b, 239). The Muslim consider Druze doctrine to be heresy specifically because it extols the transmigration of the soul (taqammoş əl-arwaḥ) and the repeal of religion.

Nestorović, Čedomir (2016). *Islamic Marketing: Understanding the Socio-Economic, Cultural, and Politico-Legal Environment*. Springer. p. 66. ISBN 978-3-319-32754-9. As far as the Druze are concerned, many Muslims regard them suspiciously, arguing that they are not in fact Muslims, but rather a religion in their own.

Roald, Anne Sofie (2011). *Religious Minorities in the Middle East: Domination, Self-Empowerment, Accommodation*. Brill. p. 255. ISBN 978-90-04-20742-4. Therefore, many of these scholars follow Ibn Taymiyya's fatwa from the beginning of the fourteenth century that declared the Druzes and the Alawis as heretics outside Islam ...

Knight, Michael (2009). *Journey to the End of Islam*. Soft Skull Press. p. 129. ISBN 978-1-59376-552-1.

Swayd 2009, p. 37: "Subsequently, Muslim opponents of the Druzes have often relied on Ibn Taymiyya's religious ruling to justify their attitudes and actions against Druzes..."

Swayd 2009, p. 25.

an-Nubala (2011)

Ahmad, A. (2009). *Islam, Modernity, Violence, and Everyday Life*. Springer. p. 164. ISBN 978-0-230-61956-2.

Aburish, Saïd K. (2004). *Nasser: the last Arab* (illustrated ed.). Duckworth. pp. 200–201. ISBN 978-0-7156-3300-7. But perhaps the most far reaching change [initiated by Nasser's guidance] was the fatwa commanding the readmission to mainstream Islam of the Shia, Alawis, and Druze. They had been considered heretics and idolaters for hundreds of years, but Nasser put an end to this for once and for all. While endearing himself to the majority Shia of Iraq and undermining Kassem [the communist ruler of Iraq at the time] might have played a part in that decision, there is no doubting the liberalism of the man in this regard.

Brünner, Rainer (2004). *Islamic Ecumenism In The 20th Century: The Azhar And Shiism Between Rapprochement And Restraint* (revised ed.). Brill. p. 360. ISBN 978-90-04-12548-3.

Pintak, Lawrence (2019). *America & Islam: Soundbites, Suicide Bombs and the Road to Donald Trump*. Bloomsbury Publishing. p. 86. ISBN 978-1-78831-559-3.

Jonas, Margaret (2011). *The Templar Spirit: The Esoteric Inspiration, Rituals and Beliefs of the Knights Templar*. Temple Lodge Publishing. p. 83. ISBN 978-1-906999-25-4. [Druze] often they are not regarded as being Muslim at all, nor do all the Druze consider themselves as Muslim

Asian and African Studies: Vol. 19, No. 3. p. 271

Asian and African Studies: Vol. 19, No. 3. p. 277

Al-Araby, Mohamed (25 April 2013). "Identity politics, Egypt and the Shia". *Al-Ahram*

Weekly. Archived from the original on 21 April 2014. Retrieved 20 April 2014.

Sandra Mackey (2009). *Mirror of the Arab World: Lebanon in Conflict* (illustrated, reprint ed.). W. W. Norton & Company. p. 28. ISBN 978-0-393-33374-9.

Esposito (1998), p. 12.

Clark, Malcolm (2003). *Islam for Dummies*. Indiana: Wiley Publishing Inc. p. 100. ISBN 978-1-118-05396-6. Archived from the original on 24 September 2015.

Frazee, Charles A. (2006). *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453–1923*. Cambridge University Press. p. 191. ISBN 978-0-521-02700-7. the conversion to Christianity of several Muslim and Druze families aided this growth immeasurably

Kayyali 2006, p. 21: "some Christians (mostly from the Orthodox faith), as well as Druze, converted to Protestantism..."

Granli, Elisabet (2011). *Religious conversion in Syria: Alawite and Druze believers* (Master's thesis). University of Oslo. hdl:10852/16181.

Mishaqa, Mikhail (1988). Thackston, Wheeler McIntosh (ed.). *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage, and Plunder: The History of the Lebanon in the 18th and 19th Centuries* by Mikhayil Mishaqa (1800–1873). State University of New York Press. p. 23. ISBN 978-0-88706-712-9.

Ágoston, Gábor; Masters, Bruce Alan (2009). *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*. Infobase Publishing. p. 530. ISBN 978-1-4381-1025-7. Retrieved 25 May 2013.

al-Ḥazīn, Farīd (2000). *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon, 1967–1976*. Harvard University Press. p. 35. ISBN 978-0-674-08105-5. So did other amirs, like the originally Druze Abi-Ilamah family, which also became Maronite

"The Druze and Assad: Strategic Bedfellows". The Washington Institute.

Fadwa N. Kirrish, "Druze Ethnicity in the Golan Heights: The Interface of Religion and Politics," *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 13.1 (1992), 122–135

"On the Horizon: The Strange World of the Druzes". *Commentary Magazine*. 20 January 1956.

D. De Smet; Ismāʿīl Tamīmī; Ḥamzah ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad (2007). *Épîtres sacrées des Druzes ; Rasāʾil al-Ḥikma: volumes 1 et 2 / Ḥamza b. ʿAlī et Ismāʿīl at-Tamīmī ; introduction, édition critique et traduction annotée par D. De Smet*. Peeters. ISBN 978-90-429-1943-3. Retrieved 17 March 2011.

Nisan 2002, p. 96–.

Nisan 2002, p. 95.

Ellwood, Robert S. (2008). *The Encyclopedia of World Religions*. Infobase Publishing. p. 95. ISBN 978-1-4381-1038-7. It is obligatory among Jews, Muslims, and Coptic Christians. Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians do not require circumcision. Starting in the last half of the 19th century, however, circumcision also became common among Christians in Europe and especially in North America.

Gruenbaum, Ellen (2015). *The Female Circumcision Controversy: An Anthropological Perspective*. University of Pennsylvania Press. p. 61. ISBN 978-0-8122-9251-0. Christian theology generally interprets male circumcision to be an Old Testament rule that is no longer an obligation ... though in many countries (especially the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa, but not so much in Europe) it is widely practiced among Christians

Stearns, Peter N. (2008). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World*. Oxford University Press. p. 179. ISBN 978-0-19-517632-2. Uniformly practiced by Jews, Muslims, and the members of Coptic, Ethiopian, and Eritrean Orthodox Churches, male circumcision remains prevalent in many regions of the world, particularly Africa, South and East Asia, Oceania, and Anglosphere countries.

"Male circumcision: Global trends and determinants of prevalence, safety and acceptability" (PDF). World Health Organization. 2007. Archived (PDF) from the original on 22 December 2015.

Thomas Riggs (2006). "Christianity: Coptic Christianity". *Worldmark Encyclopedia of Religious Practices: Religions and denominations*. Thomson Gale. ISBN 978-0-7876-6612-5. Archived from the original on 18 January 2016.

"Circumcision". *Columbia Encyclopedia*. Columbia University Press. 2011. Archived from the original on 24 September 2015.

Clark M (2011). *Islam For Dummies*. John Wiley & Sons. p. 170. ISBN 978-1-118-05396-6. Archived from the original on 18 January 2016.

Seddon, David, ed. (2013). *A Political and Economic Dictionary of the Middle East*. Routledge. ISBN 978-1-135-35561-6. ...Druze believe in seven prophets: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and Muhammad ibn Ismail ad-Darazi..

Dānā 2008, p. 47.

Crone, Patricia (2013). *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*. Princeton University Press. p. 139. ISBN 978-0-691-13484-0.

Swayd 2009, p. 88: "Jesus is known in the Druze tradition as the "True Messiah" (al-Masih al-Haq), for he delivered what Druzes view as the true message. He is also referred to as the "Messiah of the Nations"(Masih al-Umam) because he was sent to the world as "Masih of Sins" because he is the one who forgives."

Makdisi, Ussama (2000). *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon*. University of California Press. p. 35. ISBN 978-0-520-21846-8.

Brockman 2011, p. 259: "They included Jesus, John the Baptist, Moses, and Mohammed—all teachers of monotheism"

Murphy-O'Connor, Jerome (2008). *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700*. Oxford University Press. p. 205. ISBN 978-0-19-164766-6.

Parsons, L. (2011). *The Druze between Palestine and Israel 1947–49*. Springer. p. 7. ISBN 978-0-230-59598-9.

Nettler, Ronald (2014). *Muslim-Jewish Encounters*. Routledge. p. 140. ISBN 978-1-134-40854-2. ...One example of Druze anti-Jewish bias is contained in an epistle ascribed to one of the founders of Druzism, Baha al-Din

Rogan, Eugene L. (2011). *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*. Cambridge University Press. p. 73. ISBN 978-0-521-79476-3.

Stevenson, W. B. (1954). *The Muslim World: A Quarterly Review of History, Culture, Religions & the Christian Mission in Islamdom*. University of California, Berkeley Press. p. 38. ISBN 978-1-4680-6727-9.

Branca, Paolo (1997). "Some Druze 'Catechisms' in Italian Libraries". *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*. 15: 151–164. JSTOR 25802822.

"Benjamin of Tudela". www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org. Retrieved 5 November 2017.

Rogan, Eugene L. (2011). *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948*. Cambridge University Press. p. 71. ISBN 978-0-521-79476-3.

David, Abraham (2010). *To Come to the Land: Immigration and Settlement in 16th-Century Eretz-Israel*. University of Alabama Press. pp. 27–28. ISBN 978-0-8173-5643-9.

Salibi, K. (1988). *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. University of California Press. p. 66. ISBN 978-0-520-07196-4.

Joel Rappel. *History of Eretz Israel from Prehistory up to 1882* (1980), Vol. 2, p. 531. "In 1662 Sabbathai Sevi arrived in Jerusalem. It was the time when the Jewish settlements of Galilee were destroyed by the Druze: Tiberias was completely desolate and only a few former Safed residents had returned..."

Barnay, Y. *The Jews in Palestine in the eighteenth century: under the patronage of the Istanbul Committee of Officials for Palestine* (University of Alabama Press 1992) ISBN 978-0-8173-0572-7 p. 149

Dovid Rossoff, *Safed: The Mystical City*. Feldheim Publishers, 1991 ISBN 978-0-873-06566-5 pp. 149ff: *The Druze Massacre of Safed*

Lieber, Sherman (1992). *Mystics and missionaries: the Jews in Palestine, 1799–1840*. University of Utah Press. p. 334. ISBN 978-0-87480-391-4. The Druze and local Muslims vandalised the Jewish quarter. During three days, though they enacted a replay of the 1834 plunder, looting homes and desecrating synagogues—no deaths were reported. What could not be stolen was smashed and burned. Jews caught outdoors were robbed and beaten.

Louis Finkelstein (1960). *The Jews: their history, culture, and religion*. Harper. p. 679. In the summer of 1838 the Druses revolted against Ibrahim Pasha, and once more the Jews were the scapegoat. The Moslems joined the Druses in repeating the slaughter and plunder of 1834.

Ronald Florence (2004). *Blood libel: the Damascus affair of 1840*. Univ of Wisconsin Press. p. 47. ISBN 978-0-299-20280-4. There had been pogroms against the Jews in Safed in 1834 and 1838.

Parsons, L. (2011). *The Druze between Palestine and Israel 1947–49*. Springer. p. 7. ISBN 978-0-230-59598-9.

"Internal Displacement Monitoring Center – Israel". Archived from the original on 3 September 2006. Retrieved 22 April 2009.

"The Druze in Israel: Questions of Identity, Citizenship, and Patriotism" (PDF). Archived from the original (PDF) on 4 March 2016. Retrieved 9 February 2022.

Stern, Yoav (23 March 2005). "Christian Arabs / Second in a series – Israel's Christian Arabs don't want to fight to fit in". *Haaretz*. Archived from the original on 10 December 2007. Retrieved 7 January 2006.

Firro, Kais (15 August 2006). "Druze Herev Battalion Fights 32 Days With No Casualties". *Arutz Sheva*. Archived from the original on 24 December 2018. Retrieved 15 August 2006.

Nisan 2015, p. 284: "This Jewish-Druze partnership was often referred to as a "covenant of blood," in recognition of the common military yoke carried by the two peoples for the security of the country."

Rubin, Barry (2015). *The Middle East: A Guide to Politics, Economics, Society and Culture*. Taylor & Francis. p. 369. ISBN 978-1-317-45578-3.

Jiryis, Sabri (1969) [2nd impression]. The Arabs in Israel. The Institute for Palestine Studies. p. 145. ISBN 978-0-85345-377-2.

"Israel of Citizens Arab of Attitudes: Index Democracy Israeli 2016 The" (PDF). Ibrahim, Ibtisam (2000). Israel's "ethnic Project" in the City of Shafa-amr: Particularization of Identity Along Religious Lines. University of Wisconsin-Madison. pp. 170–175. ISBN 978-965-19-0588-9.

Trachtenberg, Joshua (2021). Jewish Magic and Superstition. Beyond Books Hub. ISBN 978-93-7244-128-4.

Harris, Stephen L., Understanding the Bible. Palo Alto: Mayfield. 1985.[ISBN missing]
[page needed]

Firro 2023, p. 17.

Kossaify, Ephrem (2 July 2018). "Druze: the great survivors How the world's most secretive faith has endured for a thousand years". rab News Minority Report. Firro 2023, p. 18.

Sprengling, Martin (1939). "The Berlin Druze Lexicon". The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures. 56 (4): 388–414. doi:10.1086/370557.

Amin Talea', The Origins of the Al Almwahidun Al-Druze, (Beirut: Al Majles El Durzi, 1979), p. 13.

Abu-lzeddin 1993, p. 11.

Abu-lzeddin 1993, p. 12.

Abu-lzeddin 1993, p. 10-11.

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Moroccans, and Yemenis. Conversely, other populations, like Christians and Druze, became genetically isolated in the new cultural environment. We reconstructed the genetic structure of the Levantines and found that a pre-Islamic expansion Levant was more genetically similar to Europeans than to Middle Easterners."

2 – "The predominantly Muslim populations of Syrians, Palestinians and Jordanians cluster on branches with other Muslim populations as distant as Morocco and Yemen."

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External links

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Druze.

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[Who are Egypt's Coptic Christians?](#)

Coptic Christianity refers to the Coptic Orthodox Church, one of the world's oldest Christian traditions, originating in Egypt with St. Mark the Apostle in the 1st century, known for its ancient roots, rich liturgy, strong monasticism, and distinct Miaphysite theology (believing Christ has one unified divine-human nature). Copts, the largest Christian group in Egypt, preserved ancient Egyptian (Coptic) language and culture, maintaining a continuous apostolic succession and separation from Chalcedonian churches since the 5th century, though sharing early Christian practices.

[Key Aspects](#)

Origin & History: Founded by St. Mark in Alexandria around 55 AD, it's an Apostolic Church with continuous history.

Identity: "Coptic" comes from the Greek for "Egyptian," referring to Egyptian Christians and their language (Coptic). "Orthodox" signifies adherence to original faith and traditions.

Theology: They are Oriental Orthodox, adhering to Miaphysitism, believing Christ has one unified nature (divine and human), differing from Chalcedonian churches (like Catholic/Eastern Orthodox) that define Christ as two distinct natures.

Leadership: Headed by the Pope of Alexandria, who is the Patriarch of the See of St. Mark, supported by bishops, priests (who can be married), and deacons.

Practices: Seven sacraments, extensive fasting, ancient liturgical services (Mass) using Coptic, Arabic, and other languages, and practices like removing shoes in holy places.

Community: The largest Christian community in the Middle East, primarily in Egypt, with large diaspora communities globally.

[Distinctive Features](#)

Preservation: Maintained ancient traditions, language, and theology with minimal changes over centuries.

Monasticism: A cornerstone of Coptic spiritual life, with monks often becoming bishops.

Culture: Deeply tied to Egyptian history, with cultural achievements like the Coptic Museum.

Coptic Orthodox Church: Home

They agreed to form a permanent committee, with each Church represented by two members, meeting regularly, followed by the full pr...

Home - Coptic Orthodox Church

Religions - Christianity: Coptic Orthodox Church - BBC

There are three ranks in the Coptic priesthood: Deacons, Priests and Bishops. Deacons. Deacons help priests and bishops in their m...

BBC

Our Coptic Orthodox Faith

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true Go...

copticpa.org

Show all

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Coptic Orthodox Church

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coptic_Orthodox_Ch...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coptic_Orthodox_Church)

The Coptic Orthodox Church was established by Saint Mark, an apostle and evangelist, during the middle of the 1st century (c. AD 42).

Pope

Coptic Rite

Coptic diaspora

Holy Synod of the Coptic...

People also ask

What does the Coptic Church believe?

What's the difference between coptic Christians and Christians?

Are coptic Christians the oldest Christians?

What's the difference between Coptic and Catholic?

Feedback

What is Coptic Christianity, and what do ...

GotQuestions.org

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Coptic-Christianity>

Apr 17, 2025 — Coptic Christianity is very similar to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. They profess to be genuine followers of Jesus Christ and a part of His ...

Things to know

Core Beliefs

.

What are the core beliefs of the Coptic Orthodox Church?

Practices

.

What are the practices of the Coptic Orthodox Church?

Sacraments

.

What are the sacraments of the Coptic Orthodox Church?

Liturgy

.

What is the liturgy of the Coptic Orthodox Church?

History

.

What is the history of the Coptic Orthodox Church?

Videos

Coptic Christianity Explained

YouTube · ReligionForBreakfast

Jun 24, 2025

YouTube · ReligionForBreakfast

39:44

Coptic Christianity: Unique branch of Christianity in Egypt with ancient roots, monasticism, and distinct liturgy.

Who Are the Copts, and What Is Coptic History?

YouTube · As It Was – Coptic History

Aug 27, 2023

YouTube · As It Was – Coptic History

7:52

Coptic history is the history of Egypt and its Christians from the first century forward. It is a part of both the ecclesiastical history of the Christian church and the national history of Egypt.

Who Are The Coptic Christians?

YouTube · Tribes

Jan 14, 2025

YouTube · Tribes

4:45

Coptic Christians are one of the oldest Christian communities in the world, originating in Egypt with St. Mark the Apostle in 42 AD.

Feedback

View all

What people are saying

16:09

About the Coptic language

390+ views · 14 hours ago

JuLingo · YouTube
Language enthusiast
Eastern of Coptic?

Popular comment · A Romanian church makes a lot of sense, especially if you understand the language, and there are also OCA churches in NYC that have a fair number of Romanians, like the cathedral on 2nd street in Manhattan. As for the theological differences between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians, this is a particularly complicated philosophical-theological rabbit-hole that you shouldn't let hinder you while you start practicing Christianity within a church community.

·
10+ comments · 1 week ago

r/OrthodoxChristianity
Reddit

0:25

The Coptic Orthodox Church is celebrating the 17th centenary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 AD), one of the most significant councils in Christian history. Under the theme “Nicaea... A Living Faith,” the Church held a series of events that began last Tuesday and culminated in a major gathering at Saint Mark’s Cathedral in Abbassiya. During the celebration, His Holiness Pope Tawadros II led a procession carrying the chalice containing the relics of Saint Athanasius from the Fathers’ Shrine beneath the cathedral to the main church, accompanied by metropolitans, bishops, the patriarchal vicars of Cairo and Alexandria, priests, and the deacons’ choir. Groups of Coptic faithful of all ages lined the procession route, chanting the Nicene Creed in a special hymn, while choirs filled the cathedral courtyard. A commemorative photo was taken on the cathedral steps with His Holiness holding the relics. His Holiness stated: “Athanasius at Nicaea was the voice of unity, not division

53K+ likes · 3 weeks ago

eastern_christians · Instagram
Eastern Christianity news & support

1:33

Shalom World. . Discover the rich Nativity traditions of the Coptic Church. Watch on Tree of Joy: shalomworld.org/christmas #CopticChristmas #TreeOfJoy #ChristmasTraditions #FaithAndFamily #ShalomWorld

20+ reactions · 2 weeks ago

shalomworld · Facebook
Catholic TV network

Coptic Woes

Popular comment · I think you would have better luck getting her to join the Coptic Catholic Church than you convincing her priest to allow you to get married in the Coptic Orthodox Church without your converting. A Coptic Orthodox would NOT have to go through OCIA a/k/a RCIA (study of the Catholic faith) to become Catholic. You could then get married in an Eastern rite Catholic Church if an Coptic Catholic Church is not nearby.

.

30+ comments · 1 week ago

r/EasternCatholic
Reddit

Can anyone help me understand as laymen as possible the theological difference in Christ's nature between Coptic Orthodox and the rest of Eastern Orthodoxy? They sound like they believe the same thing on that topic, but don't. My understanding is Coptics

3 reactions · 2 weeks ago

Ask About The Orthodox Faith
Facebook

1:22

Nothing is more powerful than the name of Jesus. In the Coptic Church, one of the most beautiful hymns sung is the Psali. Whether it is sung on an Adam or a Batos day, its melody fills the soul with peace, and the words continuously repeat the name of Jesus, the most powerful name of all. The church fathers have always taught us to repeat the name of Jesus all day and every day, for it is a holy name that terrifies the demons. In a Catechesis against apocryphal texts in the 5th century, it is quoted: "If you celebrate a feast and are joyful [say]: Jesus, if you have worry and suffering: Jesus; if the sons and daughters laugh: Jesus; those who touch water: Jesus; those who must flee from barbarians: Jesus; those who see wild beasts or other frightening things: Jesus; those who have pain or illness: Jesus; those who have been taken captive: Jesus; those who were unjustly judged and suffer injustice: Jesus. The name of Jesus alone is on their lips and is their salvation and their life

7.4K+ likes · 1 month ago

rej0ice · Instagram
Coptic Orthodox Christian

1:29

✠ The Beauty of the Coptic Catholic Church ✠ Did you know that there are 23 autonomous Eastern Catholic Churches in full communion with the Pope??

120+ likes · 1 month ago

advoluntas

X

Coptic Iconography. The oldest and most beautiful form of Christian art.

10+ comments · 4 weeks ago

r/Orthodox_Churches_Art

Reddit

0:20

a Church like no other #copticorthodox #orthodoxchristian #christiantiktok #church

14.8K+ views · 2 weeks ago

chrissy

TikTok

??? ANCIENT MYSTERY: The origins of the ancient Coptic Church of Egypt ??

Trending with 100K+ readers! History just got more interesting! ?? <https://www.ancient-origins.net/history/origins-ancient-coptic-church-egypt-002462> #AncientOrigins #History #Arc

50+ reactions · Sep 16, 2025

ancientoriginsweb · Facebook

Archaeology & ancient history news

1:34

Growing up in the Coptic Orthodox Church and attending Sunday School every Sunday for most of my youth, I remember talks like this. Anyone else experience these? 🙏

#coptic @coptic_culture #talk #sermon #bible #religious #copticorthodox #christian #zakaria #biblical #jesus #popetawadros #egyptian #egypt #cairo #spiritual #spirituality #religion #religious #accent #middleeast

740+ likes · 4 weeks ago

josephtawadros · Instagram

Oud virtuoso & composer

Coptic Orthodox Church: Home

Home - Coptic Orthodox Church

<https://copticorthodox.church> › ...

The Coptic Church emerged from the civilization of the Nile Valley—rich in heritage, Pharaonic wisdom, and early writing. These churches carried the legacy
Religions - Christianity: Coptic Orthodox Church

BBC

https://www.bbc.co.uk › subdivisions › coptic_1

Jun 25, 2009 — The Coptic Orthodox Church is the main Christian Church in Egypt, where it has between 6 and 11 million members.

What is special and unique about Egyptian/Coptic ...

Reddit · r/coptic

9 comments · 1 year ago

The Coptic Church have strong patristic and monastic traditions. The Christian Monasticism that is known today, came from Egypt (the Desert Fathers).

9 answers

.

Top answer:

What would you say are the special qualities of Coptic Christianity which make it different ...

What makes the Coptic church wrong? : r ...

47 answers

Jan 9, 2023

What are the key differences between the Coptic ...

18 answers

Feb 11, 2024

More results from www.reddit.com

Introduction to the Coptic Church

CopticChurch.net

<https://www.copticchurch.net › introduction-to-the-copti...>

The Coptic Orthodox Church is the Christian church that was founded in Egypt. The Copts as the successors of the ancient Egyptians are defined as the modern ...

Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria | History, Beliefs & ...

Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com › topic › Coptic-Orthodox-C...>

Oct 27, 2025 — Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, Oriental Orthodox church and principal Christian church in predominantly Muslim Egypt.

What Is Coptic Orthodoxy — Saint Marina

stmarina.org

<https://www.stmarina.org › what-is-coptic-orthodoxy>

The Coptic Orthodox Church is an ancient Christian Church – It is one of the most ancient Churches in the world, having been founded by Saint Mark the Apostle.

People also search for
How is Coptic Christianity different
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Coptic Christianity vs Catholicism
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"Coptic Church" redirects here. For the architectural style, see Coptic architecture. For church buildings, see Lists of Coptic church buildings. For an Eastern Catholic particular

church, see Coptic Catholic Church.

Coptic Orthodox Church

Ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἡ Ἑμενική ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος (Coptic)

الكنيسة القبطية الأرثوذكسية (Arabic)

Saint Mark's Cathedral, Cairo, Egypt

Type Autocephaly

Classification Christian

Orientation Oriental Orthodox

Scripture Septuagint, New Testament, Coptic versions

Theology Oriental Orthodox theology

Polity Episcopal

Governance Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Church

Pope Tawadros II

Region Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Middle East, and diaspora

Language Coptic, Greek, Arabic, Dialectal Arabic, Tamazight (minority)

Liturgy Coptic Rite

Headquarters Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral, Cairo, Egypt

Founder St. Mark the Evangelist (traditional)

Origin 42 A.D

Alexandria, Egypt

Separations Coptic Catholic Church (1895)

British Orthodox Church (2015)

Members 10 million[1][2][3][4][5][6][7]

Other names Coptic Church

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria

Official website <https://copticorthodox.church/en>

This article contains Coptic text. Without proper rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes, or other symbols instead of Coptic letters.

The Coptic Orthodox Church (Coptic: Ἡ Ἐκκλησία ἡ Ἑμενική ἡ Ὀρθόδοξος, romanized: *Ti-ekklisia en-remenkimi en-orthodoxos*, lit. 'the Egyptian Orthodox Church'; Arabic: الكنيسة القبطية الأرثوذكسية, romanized: *al-Kanīsa al-Qibṭiyya al-'Urthūdhuksiyya*), also known as the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, is an Oriental Orthodox Christian church based in Egypt. The head of the church and the See of Alexandria is the pope of Alexandria on the Holy Apostolic See of Saint Mark, who also carries the title of Father of fathers, Shepherd of shepherds, Ecumenical Judge and the 13th among the Apostles.

The See of Alexandria is titular. The Coptic pope presides from Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in the Abbassia District in Cairo. The church follows the Coptic Rite for its liturgy, prayer and devotional patrimony. Adherents of the Coptic Orthodox Church make up Egypt's largest and most significant minority population, and the largest

population of Christians in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).[1][2][3] They make up the largest share of the approximately 10 million Christians in Egypt.[8][9][10][11]

The Coptic Orthodox Church was established by Saint Mark, an apostle and evangelist, during the middle of the 1st century (c. AD 42).[12] Due to disputes concerning the nature of Christ, the Oriental Orthodox Churches were in schism after the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451.[13]

After AD 639, Egypt was ruled by its Islamic conquerors from Arabia. In the 12th century, the church relocated its seat from Alexandria to Cairo. The same century also saw the Copts become a religious minority. During the 14th and 15th centuries, Nubian Christianity was supplanted by Islam. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the larger body of ethnic Egyptian Christians began to call themselves Coptic Orthodox, to distinguish themselves from the Catholic Copts and from the Eastern Orthodox, who are mostly Greek.[14] In 1959, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church was granted autocephaly. This was extended to the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church in 1998 following the successful Eritrean War of Independence from Ethiopia. Since the 2011 Egyptian revolution, Coptic Christians have suffered increased religious discrimination and violence.[15]

History

Part of a series on
Oriental Orthodoxy

Oriental Orthodox churches

CopticSyriacArmenianIndianCiliciaOrthodox Tewahedo EthiopianEritrean

Independent churches

Autonomous churches

History and theology

Liturgy and practices

Major figures

Related topics

Links and resources

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Copts

Culture

ArchitectureArtCalendarCoptologyCrossEncyclopediaFastingHistoryIdentityLanguageLiterature CopticCopto-

ArabicMusicMonasticismNamesNationalismPersecutionPhilosophyRiteSaintsToponymyWriting system

Regions

EgyptDiasporaNorth America (United States (churches), Canada (churches))Australia

(churches)Africa (Sudan, Libya)AsiaEuropeSouth America

Denominations

Coptic Orthodox ChurchCoptic Catholic ChurchGreek Orthodox Patriarchate of AlexandriaProtestantism Evangelical Church

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Apostolic foundation

According to tradition, the Coptic Church was founded by St. Mark the Evangelist c. AD 42; it regards itself as the subject of many prophecies in the Old Testament.[12]

Coptic language in the church

The Coptic language is a universal language used in Coptic churches in every country. It descends from Ancient Egyptian and uses the Coptic alphabet, a script descended from the Greek alphabet with added characters derived from the Demotic script. Today, the Bohairic dialect of Coptic is used primarily for liturgical purposes.[16] Many of the hymns in the liturgy are in Coptic and have been passed down for many centuries. The language is used to preserve Egypt's original language, which was banned by the Arab invaders, who ordered the use of Arabic instead.[17] However, most Copts speak Arabic, the official language of Egypt.[16] Hence, Arabic is also used in church services nowadays. The service books, though written in Coptic, have Arabic text in parallel columns.[14]

Catechetical School of Alexandria

The Catechetical School of Alexandria is the oldest catechetical school in the world. Jerome records that the Christian School of Alexandria was founded by Mark himself. [18]

The theological college of the catechetical school was re-established in 1893.[19]

The school became a leading center of the allegorical method of biblical interpretation, espoused rapprochement between Greek culture and the Christian faith, and attempted to assert orthodox Christian teachings against heterodox views in an era of doctrinal flux.[20]

Role and participation in the ecumenical councils

Council of Nicaea

Main article: First Council of Nicaea

In the 4th century, an Alexandrian presbyter named Arius began a theological dispute about the nature of Christ that spread throughout the Christian world and is now known as Arianism. The Council of Nicea in AD 325 was convened by Emperor Constantine I after Pope Alexander I of Alexandria proposed holding a council to respond to heresies. [21] A council under the presidency of Hosius of Cordova attempted to resolve the dispute. This eventually led to the formulation of the Symbol of Faith, also known as the Nicene Creed.[22]

Council of Constantinople

Main article: First Council of Constantinople

In AD 381, Pope Timothy I of Alexandria presided over the second ecumenical council known as the First Council of Constantinople, to judge Macedonius, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. This council completed the Nicene Creed with this confirmation of the divinity of the Holy Spirit:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified who spoke by the Prophets and in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church. We confess one Baptism for the remission of sins and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the coming age, Amen[23]

Council of Ephesus

Main article: Council of Ephesus

Coptic Icon in the Coptic Altar of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem

Another theological dispute in the 5th century occurred over the teachings of Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople who taught that God the Word was not hypostatically joined with human nature, but rather dwelt in the man Jesus. As a consequence of this, he denied the title "Mother of God" (Theotokos) to the Virgin Mary, declaring her instead to be "Mother of Christ" Christotokos.[citation needed]

The council confirmed the teachings of Athanasius and confirmed the title of Mary as "Mother of God".[24] It also clearly stated that anyone who separated Christ into two hypostases was anathema, as Cyril had said that there is "One Nature for God the Word Incarnate" (Mia Physis tou Theou Logou Sesarkōmenē). The introduction to the creed is formulated as follows:[citation needed]

We magnify you O Mother of the True Light and we glorify you O saint and Mother of God (Theotokos) for you have borne unto us the Saviour of the world. Glory to you O our Master and King: Christ, the pride of the Apostles, the crown of the martyrs, the rejoicing of the righteous, firmness of the churches and the forgiveness of sins. We proclaim the Holy Trinity in One Godhead: we worship Him, we glorify Him, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord bless us, Amen.[24]

Council of Chalcedon

Main article: Council of Chalcedon

St. Mark Coptic Cathedral in Alexandria

The church of Alexandria was part in communion with the rest of Christendom until the Council of Chalcedon.[16] When, in AD 451, Emperor Marcian attempted to heal divisions in the church, the response of Pope Dioscorus—the Pope of Alexandria who was later exiled—was that the emperor should not intervene in the affairs of the church. It was at Chalcedon that the emperor, through the imperial delegates, enforced harsh

disciplinary measures against Pope Dioscorus in response to his boldness. In AD 449, Pope Dioscorus headed the 2nd Council of Ephesus, called the "Robber Council" by Chalcedonian historians. It held to the Miaphysite formula which upheld the Christology of "One Incarnate Nature of God the Word" (Greek: μία φύσις Θεοῦ Λόγου σεσαρκωμένη (mia physis Theou Logou sesarkōmenē)).[25][13]

In terms of Christology, the Oriental Orthodox (Non-Chalcedonians) understanding is that Christ is "One Nature—the Logos Incarnate," of the full humanity and full divinity. The Chalcedonians' understanding is that Christ is recognized in two natures, full humanity and full divinity.[14] Oriental Orthodoxy contends that such a formulation is no different from what the Nestorians teach.[13]

From that point onward, Alexandria would have two patriarchs: the non-Chalcedonian native Egyptian one, now known as the Coptic pope of Alexandria and patriarch of All Africa on the Holy Apostolic See of St. Mark, and the Melkite or Imperial patriarch, now known as the Greek Orthodox patriarch of Alexandria.[26][13]

Almost the entire Egyptian population rejected the terms of the Council of Chalcedon and remained faithful to the native Egyptian Church (now known as the Coptic Orthodox Church).[27][28][29]

By anathematizing Pope Leo because of the tone and content of his tome, as per Alexandrine Theology perception, Pope Dioscorus was found guilty of doing so without due process; in other words, the Tome of Leo was not a subject of heresy in the first place, but it was a question of questioning the reasons behind not having it either acknowledged or read at the Second Council of Ephesus in AD 449. Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria was never labeled as a heretic by the council's canons. Copts also believe that the pope of Alexandria was forcibly prevented from attending the third congregation of the council from which he was ousted, apparently the result of a conspiracy tailored by the Roman delegates.[30]

Before the current positive era of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox dialogues, Chalcedonians sometimes used to call the non-Chalcedonians "Monophysites", though the Coptic Orthodox Church in reality regards Monophysitism as a heresy. The Chalcedonian doctrine in turn came to be known as "Dyophysite". A term that comes closer to Coptic Orthodoxy is Miaphysite, which refers to a conjoined nature for Christ, both human and divine, united indivisibly in the Incarnate Logos.[31][32]

From Chalcedon to the Arab conquest of Egypt
Muslim conquest of Egypt

Makurian wall painting depicting a Nubian bishop and Virgin Mary (11th century)
The Muslim invasion of Egypt took place in AD 639. Relying on eyewitness testimony, Bishop John of Nikiu in his Chronicle provides a graphic account of the invasion from a Coptic perspective. Although the Chronicle has only been preserved in an Ethiopic

(Ge'ez) text, some scholars believe that it was originally written in Coptic.[33] John's account is critical of the invaders who he says "despoiled the Egyptians of their possessions and dealt cruelly with them", [34] and he details the atrocities committed by the Muslims against the native population during the conquest:

And when with great toil and exertion they had cast down the walls of the city, they forthwith made themselves masters of it, and put to the sword thousands of its inhabitants and of the soldiers, and they gained an enormous booty, and took the women and children captive and divided them amongst themselves, and they made that city a desolation.[35]

Though critical of the Muslim commander (Amr ibn al-As), who, during the campaign, he says "had no mercy on the Egyptians, and did not observe the covenant they had made with him, for he was of a barbaric race", [36] he does note that following the completion of the conquest, Amr "took none of the property of the Churches, and he committed no act of spoilation or plunder, and he preserved them throughout all his days." [37]

Despite the political upheaval, the Egyptian population remained mainly Christian. However, gradual conversions to Islam over the centuries had changed Egypt from a Christian to a largely Muslim country by the end of the 12th century.[38] Another scholar writes that a combination of "repression of Coptic revolts", Arab-Muslim immigration, and Coptic conversion to Islam resulted in the demographic decline of the Copts.[39] Egypt's Umayyad rulers taxed Christians at a higher rate than Muslims, driving merchants towards Islam and undermining the economic base of the Coptic Church.[40] Although the Coptic Church did not disappear, the Umayyad tax policies made it difficult for the church to retain the Egyptian elites.[41]

Under Islamic rule (640–1800)

Arabic Coptic Prayer book, 1760

In 969, Egypt entered the Fatimid dynasty (in Egypt from 969 to 1171), who adopted a largely favorable attitude toward the Christians. The major exception to this was the persecution led by Caliph al-Hakim between 1004 and 1013, which included clothing regulations, prohibition of publicly celebrating Christian festivals, and dismissal of Christian and Jewish functionaries. However, at the end of his reign al-Hakim rescinded these measures, allowing the Copts to regain privileged positions within the administration.[42]

The Coptic patriarchal residence moved from Alexandria to Cairo during the patriarchate of Cyril II (1078–92). This move was at the demand of the grand vizier Badr al-Jamali, who insisted that the pope establish himself in the capital.[42] When Saladin entered Egypt in 1163, this ushered in a government focused on defending Sunni Islam. Christians were again discriminated against, and meant to show modesty in their religious ceremonies and buildings.[42]

During the Ottoman period, Copts were classified alongside other Oriental Orthodox and Nestorian peoples under the Armenian millet.[43]

In 1798, the French invaded Egypt unsuccessfully and the British helped the Turks to regain power over Egypt under the Muhammad Ali dynasty.[44]

From the 19th century-1952 revolution

The position of Copts began to improve early in the 19th century under the stability and tolerance of the Muhammad Ali Dynasty. The Coptic community ceased to be regarded by the state as an administrative unit. In 1855 the jizya tax was abolished by Sa'id Pasha.[45] Shortly thereafter, the Copts started to serve in the Egyptian army.[46]

Coptic monks, between 1898 and 1914

Towards the end of the 19th century, the Coptic Church underwent phases of new development. In 1853, Pope Cyril IV established the first modern Coptic schools, including the first Egyptian school for girls. He also founded a printing press, which was only the second national press in the country. The pope established very friendly relations with other denominations, to the extent that when the Greek Patriarch in Egypt had to absent himself from the country for a long period of time, he left his church under the guidance of the Coptic patriarch.[46]

The Theological College of the School of Alexandria was reestablished in 1893.[19] It began its new history with five students, one of whom was later to become its dean. Today it has campuses in Alexandria and Cairo, and in various dioceses throughout Egypt, as well as outside Egypt. It has campuses in New Jersey, Los Angeles, Sydney, Melbourne, and London, where potential clergymen and other qualified men and women study many subjects, including theology, church history, missionary studies, and the Coptic language.[46]

From the mid 20th-early 21st centuries

Religion in Egypt

Cairo mosques

Religions in Egypt

Islam SunniShia

Christianity Coptic OrthodoxyGreek OrthodoxyCatholicismProtestantism

Judaism

Religious institutions

Al-Azhar University

Dar al-Ifta al-Misriyyah

Coptic Orthodox Church

Catechetical School of Alexandria

General Congregation Council

Unrecognized religions

& denominations

Ahmadiyya
Bahá'í Faith
Other topics
Irreligion in Egypt
Secularism in Egypt
Freedom of religion in Egypt
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In 1959, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church was granted its first own patriarch Abuna Basilios by Pope Cyril VI.[47] Furthermore, the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church similarly became independent of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church in 1994, when four bishops were consecrated by Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria to form the basis of a local Holy Synod of the Eritrean Church. In 1998, the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church gained its autocephaly from the Coptic Orthodox Church when its first patriarch was enthroned by Pope Shenouda III.[48]

Since the 1980s theologians from the Oriental (non-Chalcedonian) Orthodox and Eastern (Chalcedonian) Orthodox churches have been meeting in a bid to resolve theological differences, and have concluded that many of the differences are caused by the two groups using different terminology to describe the same thing.[49]

In the 1990s, the Orthodox Church of the British Isles (formerly the Catholicate of the West) joined the Coptic Orthodox Church as a diocese named the British Orthodox Church.[50][51][52] By 2015, it formally separated with the Coptic Orthodox Church as a non-canonical, autocephalous church.[53]

In the summer of 2001, the Coptic Orthodox and Greek Orthodox patriarchates of Alexandria agreed to mutually recognize baptisms performed in each other's churches, making re-baptisms unnecessary, and to recognize the sacrament of marriage as celebrated by the other.[54]

In Tahrir Square, Cairo, on Wednesday 2 February 2011, Coptic Christians joined hands to provide a protective cordon around their Muslim neighbors during salat (prayers) in the midst of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution.[55]

Continued persecution into the 21st century

Main article: Persecution of Copts

While Copts have cited instances of persecution throughout their history, Human Rights Watch has noted growing religious intolerance and sectarian violence against Coptic Christians in recent years, and a failure by the Egyptian government to effectively investigate properly and prosecute those responsible.[56][57] More than a hundred Egyptian copts were killed in sectarian clashes from 2011 to 2017, and many homes and businesses destroyed. In Minya, 77 cases of sectarian attacks on Copts between 2011 and 2016 were documented by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights.[58]

Coptic Christian women and girls are often abducted and disappear.[59][60]

In 2015, 21 men traveled to Libya to support their families.[61] There, they would be kidnapped and beheaded by the Islamic State in Libya.

Continued church reforms

Under Pope Shenouda III, from 1971 to 2012, the church underwent a large transformation. Writing in 2013, the theologian Samuel Tadros stated "Today's Coptic Church as an institution is built solely on his vision".[62] For the first time in its history, the synod codified its internal laws. It also established numerous Coptic institutions within and outside of Egypt. Shenouda raised the number of bishops from 26 to 117 and ordained hundreds of priests, which greatly reduced the influence of any one bishop. Shenouda also instituted a yearly meeting of the synod, which greatly expanded the number of laws governing the church. This included instituting church curriculums for the education of new priests, new deacons, and newly weds. For the first time in the Coptic Church's modern history, women could become ordained as deacons. The synod also adopted a model for community development, dramatically increasing the scope of community services provided by the church, including: hospitals, adult literacy schools, orphanages, libraries, and community centres. Much of this work was fuelled by donations from wealthy Coptic industrialists and Copts from abroad. Shenouda also held talks with the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, in an effort to promote ecumenism.[62] On 10 May 1973, Shenouda visited the Vatican, where a joint Christological declaration was issued jointly by the Coptic Orthodox and Catholic churches.[63]

Pope Shenouda also increased the church's involvement in politics, seeing it as a way to advocate for the interest of Copts, during the rise of Islamism in Egypt and increase in terrorist attacks. The president of Egypt, Anwar Sadat ordered that Shenouda be put into exile in a Coptic Monastery far away from Cairo in 1981. This exile was short lived, ending when Sadat was assassinated by Muslim extremists a few months later. Under president Hosni Mubarak, Shenouda continued his political stance and often protested persecution of Copts by leaving Cairo and staying in seclusion, which often caused the regime to quickly address issues. Shenouda's political involvement drew criticism from some church members, including the prominent monk Father Matta El Meskeen.[64][65]

On 17 March 2012, Pope Shenouda died, leaving many Copts mourning and worrying as tensions rose with Muslims. Shenouda constantly met with Muslim leaders in order to create peace, his death resulting in concerns that without his mediation good relations would break down. Many were worried about increased Islamic control of Egypt as the Muslim Brotherhood won 70% of the parliamentary elections.[66][67] Shenouda's approach to church leadership has, in part, been adopted by the current patriarch. Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria maintains relations with the Egyptian government and other churches. However, while Shenouda was critical of the expanded influence of Protestant teaching and books in Coptic churches, Tawadros has increased ecumenical dialogue with several Protestant churches. In 2013, Tawadros supported the movement

demanding the removal of Egyptian Islamist president Mohamed Morsi.[68] However, Tawadros has been a relatively less political figure than his predecessor and has expressed support for the Egyptian government's institutions during crises.[69]

In 2020, a woman in Florida accused a former priest of sexual assault when she was a minor. She claimed that he was defrocked in 2014, but continued presenting himself as a priest. In response, the synod issued a public statement disavowing him and instituted anti-abuse measures. Several dioceses in North America and Europe issued statements in support of sexual assault survivors.[70][62][71]

On 10 May 2023, Pope Tawadros visited the Vatican to celebrate Coptic-Catholic Friendship day and the 50 year anniversary of the meeting between Pope Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III. In this same year Pope Francis announced that the 21 Coptic Martyrs killed by ISIS in Libya in 2015 would be added to the Catholic Roman Martyrology, and Pope Tawadros gifted relics from each of the 21 martyrs to the Vatican. [72]

Fasts, feasts, liturgy and canonical hours

Main articles: Coptic Rite, Coptic monasticism, and Fasting and abstinence of the Coptic Orthodox Church

The Agpeya is a breviary used in Coptic Orthodox Christianity to pray the canonical hours at seven fixed prayer times of the day, in the eastward direction.[73] Communicants of the Coptic Orthodox Church use a breviary known as the Agpeya to pray the canonical hours at seven fixed prayer times while facing in the eastward direction, in anticipation of the Second Coming of Jesus; this Christian practice has its roots in Psalm 119:164, in which the prophet David prays to God seven times a day.[74] [73][75] Church bells enjoin Christians to pray at these hours.[76] Before praying, they wash their hands and face to be clean before and present their best to God; shoes are removed to acknowledge that one is offering prayer before a holy God.[74][77] During each of the seven fixed prayer times, Coptic Orthodox Christians pray "prostrating three times in the name of the Trinity; at the end of each Psalm ... while saying the 'Alleluia';" and 41 times for each of the Kyrie eleisons present in a canonical hour.[77] In the Coptic Orthodox Church, it is customary for women to wear a Christian headcovering when praying.[78] The Coptic Orthodox Church observes days of ritual purification.[79][80] However, while meat that still contains blood after cooking is discouraged from being eaten, the Coptic Church does not forbid its members from consuming any particular type of food, unlike in Islam or Judaism.[81]

A modern Coptic cathedral in Aswan.

All churches of the Coptic Orthodox Church are designed to face the eastward direction of prayer and efforts are made to remodel churches obtained from other Christian denominations that are not built in this fashion.[82]

In Coptic Orthodox Christianity, fasting is defined as going without meat or dairy.[83] With respect to Eucharistic discipline, Coptic Orthodox Christians fast from midnight onwards (or at least nine hours) prior to receiving the sacrament of Holy Communion. [84] They fast every Wednesday and Friday of the year (Wednesdays in remembrance of the betrayal of Christ, and on Fridays in remembrance of His crucifixion and death). [84] In total, fast days in a year for Coptic Orthodox Christians numbers between 210 and 240. This means that Copts abstain from all animal products for up to two-thirds of each year.[84][85] The fasts for Advent and Lent are 43 days and 55 days, respectively. [84] In August, before the celebration of the Dormition of the Mother of God, Coptic Christians fast 15 days; fasting is also done before the feast of Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, starting from the day of Pentecost.[84][85] Married couples refrain from sexual relations during Lent "to give themselves time for fasting and prayer".[83]

Christmas has been a national holiday in Egypt since 2003. It is the only Christian holiday in Egypt.[86] Coptic Christmas, which usually falls on January 6 or 7 is a major feast. Other major feasts are Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Easter, Pentecost, Ascension, and Annunciation. These are known in the Coptic world as the Seven Major Feasts. Major feasts are always preceded by fasts. Additionally, the Coptic Orthodox Church also has Seven Minor Feasts: the Circumcision of the Lord, Entrance into the Temple, Entrance into Egypt, Transfiguration, Maundy Thursday, Thomas Sunday, and Great Lent.[16][86][87] Furthermore, there are several indigenous feasts of the Theotokos. There are also other feasts commemorating the martyrdom of important saints from Coptic history.[85]

Demographics

Available Egyptian census figures and other third-party survey reports have not reported more than 4 million Coptic Orthodox Christians in Egypt.[1][2] However media and other agencies, sometimes taking into account the claims of the church itself, generally approximate the Coptic Orthodox population at 10% of the Egyptian population or 10 million people.[3][4][5] Egyptian Copts are the biggest Christian community in the Arab world. Estimates of their numbers vary, but generally range between 4.7 and 7.1 million. [88] The majority of them live in Egypt under the jurisdiction of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Since 2006, Egyptian censuses have not reported on religion and church leaders have alleged that Christians were under-counted in government surveys. In 2017, a government owned newspaper Al Ahram estimated the percentage of Copts at 10 to 15% and the membership claimed by the Coptic Orthodox Church is in the range of 20 to 25 million.[89][90][91][92]

There are also significant numbers in the diaspora outside Africa in countries such as the United States, Canada, Australia, France, and Germany. The exact number of Egyptian born Coptic Orthodox Christians in the diaspora is hard to determine and is roughly estimated to be close to 1 million.[93][94][95]

There are between 150,000 and 200,000 adherents in Sudan.[96][97]

Jurisdiction outside Egypt

Jesus Christ in a Coptic icon

Besides Egypt, the Church of Alexandria has jurisdiction over all of Africa. The following autocephalous churches have strong historical ties to the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Main article: Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Tradition holds that Ethiopia was first evangelized by St. Matthew and St. Bartholomew in the 1st century ce, and the first Ethiopian convert is thought to have been the eunuch in Jerusalem mentioned in The Acts of the Apostles (8:27–40). Ethiopia was further Christianized in the 4th century ce by two men (likely brothers) from Tyre—St. Frumentius.[98] Ever since the conversion of Ezana of Axum to Christianity by Frumentius in 325 AD, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church has received its archbishops from the Coptic Orthodox Church.[99] Until the mid-twentieth century, the metropolitans of the Ethiopian church were ethnic Copts. Joseph II consecrated Archbishop Abuna Basilios as the first native head of the Ethiopian Church on 14 January 1951. In 1959, Pope Cyril VI of Alexandria crowned Abuna Basilios as the first Patriarch of Ethiopia.[47]

Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Main article: Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Following the independence of Eritrea from Ethiopia in 1993, the newly independent Eritrean government appealed to Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria for Eritrean Orthodox autocephaly. In 1994, Pope Shenouda ordained Abune Phillipos as first Archbishop of Eritrea.[48]

Episcopal titles

Main article: Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church

Pope Shenouda III, the 117th Patriarch of Alexandria on the Holy Apostolic See of Saint Mark the Evangelist (1971–2012).

Administration

Main articles: The Holy Synod of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and Dioceses of the Coptic Orthodox Church

The Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria is governed by its Holy Synod, which is headed by the Patriarch of Alexandria. Under his authority are the metropolitan archbishops, metropolitan bishops, diocesan bishops, patriarchal exarchs, missionary bishops, auxiliary bishops, suffragan bishops, assistant bishops, chorbishops and the patriarchal vicars for the Church of Alexandria.[100] They are organized as follows:

23 metropolitanates, out of which 19 metropolitanates are in Egypt, one metropolitanate in the Near East, two in the USA and one in Africa; served by one metropolitan archbishop and 22 metropolitan bishops; out of the 23 hierarchs, one metropolitan archbishop is in the Near East, while 19 metropolitan bishops are in Egypt, two

metropolitan bishops in the USA and one metropolitan bishop in Africa.

66 dioceses with 39 diocesan bishops are in Egypt, 14 diocesan bishops are in Europe, 6 diocesan bishops are in North America, two diocesan bishops are in South America, two diocesan bishops are in Sudan, two diocesan bishops in Australia, and one diocesan bishop in Africa.

one suffragan diocese, with one suffragan bishop in North America.

5 auxiliary bishops, two in the Diocese of Los Angeles, two in the Southern USA diocese in North America and one in the diocese of Qena, Egypt.

13 assistant bishops in Egypt for 13 suffragan dioceses within an archdiocese under the Patriarch's jurisdiction.

8 patriarchal exarchates, with one in Asia & Australia, one in Africa, three in North America and three in Egypt.

18 bishop abbots for 17 patriarchal monasteries in Egypt and one patriarchal monastery in Australia.

one general bishop, patriarchal emissary at large in USA

four general bishops, administrators of patriarchal institutions in Egypt.

one hegumen in the capacity of grand Economos, patriarchal vicar for Alexandria.

one hegumen as administrative patriarchal vicar for Cairo.

See also

icon Christianity portal

flag Egypt portal

Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church

General Congregation Council

List of Coptic Orthodox churches in Egypt

Copts

List of Coptic saints

Coptic architecture

Institute of Coptic Studies

Coptic Orphans

Oriental Orthodox Churches

Orthodox Tewahedo

Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church

Christian influences on the Islamic world

Christianity and Islam

Christianity in Africa

Christianity in the Middle East

Arab Christians

Flight into Egypt

Zabbaleen

2011 Alexandria bombing

Nag Hammadi massacre

Persecution of Copts

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AI Overview

Torn From Their Homeland, Bay Area Assyrians Yearn for ...

Assyrian Christianity refers to the ancient Christian traditions of the indigenous Aramaic-speaking people of Mesopotamia (Assyrians/Chaldeans/Syriacs), primarily using the East Syriac Rite (Church of the East) and West Syriac Rite (Syriac Orthodox), characterized by Syriac liturgy and deep historical roots, distinct from Greek/Latin Christianity, with major denominations including the Assyrian Church of the East, Chaldean Catholic Church, and Syriac Orthodox Church, all facing modern diaspora and persecution.

Key Characteristics:

Ancient Origins: Assyrians were among the earliest converts to Christianity, potentially in the 1st century AD, within the historical lands of Assyria (modern Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Iran).

Syriac Tradition: They belong to the broader Syriac Christian tradition, using Classical Syriac (an Eastern Aramaic dialect) as their liturgical language.

East Syriac Rite: The dominant rite, using the ancient Liturgy of Saints Addai and Mari, with major branches like the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church (in communion with Rome).

Major Denominations:

Assyrian Church of the East: Follows the historical Church of the East tradition, known for its missionary expansion to Asia (India, China).

Chaldean Catholic Church: A branch that reunited with the Catholic Church in the 16th century, using the East Syriac Rite.

Syriac Orthodox Church: Uses the West Syriac Rite but shares Aramaic heritage; its patriarchal seat is in Damascus.

Historical Schisms: Theological and political differences, especially after the Council of Ephesus (431 AD), led to splits, creating distinct Eastern churches.

Modern Diaspora: Persecutions (like the Sayfo genocide) and conflict have dispersed Assyrian Christians globally, with significant communities in North America, Europe, Australia, and the Middle East.

In essence, Assyrian Christianity is an indigenous Aramaic expression of Christianity, rich in history, distinct liturgical rites, and enduring cultural identity, despite centuries of upheaval.

East Syriac Rite - Wikipedia

The East Syriac Rite, or East Syrian Rite (also called the Edessan Rite, Assyrian Rite, Persian Rite, Chaldean Rite, Nestorian Rit...

Wikipedia

Syriac Christianity - Wikipedia

Terms for Syriac Christians ... Indigenous Aramaic-speaking communities of the Near East (Syriac: ܣܪܝܝܬܐ) adopted Christianity ver...

Wikipedia

Assyrian people - Wikipedia

Assyrians are almost exclusively Christian, with most adhering to the East and West Syriac liturgical rites of Christianity. Both ...

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Assyrian Church of the East

Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assyrian_Church_of_the_East

is an Eastern Syriac Christian denomination that follows the traditional Christology and ecclesiology of the historical Church of the East.

Awa III

Shimun XXI Eshai

Ankawa

Catholicos

People also ask

What do Assyrian Christians believe?

When did Assyrians convert to Christianity?

Are chaldeans Christians?

Are all Iraqi Christians Assyrian?

Feedback

What is an Assyrian Christian?

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

https://www.goarch.org/asset_publisher/content/w...

The Assyrians became an independent Christian community, with its own head called a Catholicos and Patriarch.

Things to know

Christian Type

.

What type of Christians are Assyrians?

Religious Demographics

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What percentage of Assyrians are Christian?

Conversion Reasons

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Why did Assyrians convert to Christianity?

Assyrian people

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Assyrians are almost exclusively Christian, with most adhering to the East and West Syriac liturgical rites of Christianity. Both rites use Classical Syriac as ...

Videos

The Assyrian Church of the East Explained in 2 Minutes

YouTube · Ready to Harvest

Jan 3, 2023

YouTube · Ready to Harvest

2:35

Assyrian Church of the East: Independent since 424 AD, rejected Nestorianism, uses Syriac language, views Christ as truly present in the Eucharist.

Assyrian Renaissance: Assyrian Christianity

YouTube · Assyrian Cultural Foundation

Jun 9, 2025

YouTube · Assyrian Cultural Foundation

42:12

Assyrian Christian scholars like Narsei and Ephraim used biblical stories to teach spiritual lessons.

Assyrian History Class #14: Understanding Assyrian Christian ...

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Jan 9, 2023

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1:29:49

Learn about the divisions within Assyrian Christianity, including christological beliefs, names, identities, and the opposition to the use of the word "Assyrian."

Feedback

View all

The Assyrian Church

World Council of Churches

<https://www.oikoumene.org/church-families/the-assyr...>

The Assyrian Church is the original Christian church in what was once Parthia; eastern Iraq and Iran. Geographically it stretched in the medieval period to ...

The Assyrian Church is a Christian community everyone ...

Reddit · r/religion

20+ comments · 4 years ago

The Assyrian Christian community is one of the oldest Christian communities in the globe. They are indigenous to Mesopotamia and as you can guess are ...

What do you think about the Assyrian Church of the ...

145 posts

Oct 6, 2023

Why are there no Assyrian Eastern Orthodox Christians?

21 posts

Nov 19, 2020

More results from www.reddit.com

8 things you didn't know about Assyrian Christians

PBS

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/8-things-did...>

Mar 21, 2015 — Assyrian Christians — often simply referred to as Assyrians — are an ethnic minority group whose origins lie in the Assyrian Empire, a major ...

What We Believe - Assyrian Church of the East

assyrianchurch.net

<https://assyrianchurch.net/what-we-believe>

The Church is meant to be the visible body of Christ, sent into the world to glorify God and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Doctrine - Assyrian Church of the East

assyrianchurch.org.au

<https://www.assyrianchurch.org.au/doctrine-1>

The teaching of the Church of the East is based on the faith of the universal Church as set forth in the Nicene Creed.

What people are saying

The first Assyrian religion was Ashurism derived from Ashur, the Assyrian supreme god. In 1st Century AD. under King Abgar V of Edessa, Assyrians were the first to collectively as a nation convert to Christianity. Considered as the first Patriarchs, Thaddeus, Thomas and Bartholomew lay the foundation for the Church of the East in 33 AD. Today, the church's official name is the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East with Mar Dinkha IV as its Patriarch with his See in Chicago. By 451 AD. in the Council of Chalcedon, a conflict arose over the belief of whether or not Christ's single inseparable nature was both human and divine, leading to the split of the Church of the East thus giving birth to the Syriac Orthodox Church (Jacobite). Presently, Mor Ignatius Zakka I is the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East with his See in Damascus. By 780 AD, the Syriac Orthodox Church witnessed a division when Mar Maron lead his followers from Syria to Mount Lebanon and founded the Mar

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X

Did Oriental Orthodoxy and the (Assyrian) Church of the East break from Catholicism at the same time, and for the same reason(s)?

Popular comment · Different times and for different reasons, and they didn't break from "Catholicism", in the modern sense, but from the Early Unified Church (the East-West Schism that happened in ~1054 is what led to the distinction between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism). The Assyrian Church of the East broke away from the early, unified Church after the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD. The council condemned Nestorius for his Christological teaching that seemed to divide Christ into two persons (a human person and a divine person). The council also upheld the title of Mary as Theotokos (God-bearer), affirming the unity of Christ's person, which Nestorius was opposed to. There were also political aspects to the schism here, as Persia was trying to distance itself from Rome/Byzantium. The Oriental Orthodox Church broke away after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. This council declared that Christ is one person in two natures, "without confusion, without change, without division, without separation". Those that would become known as the Oriental Orthodox opposed this definition because they felt it betrayed the teaching of St. Cyril of Alexandria, who had strongly emphasized the unity of Christ's nature ("one incarnate nature of the Word of God"). It's also worth noting also that there has been a lot of dialogue between the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches. Both sides came to realize that much of the split was terminological and political, not an essential difference in faith. Both affirm that Christ is fully God and fully man, one Person with divinity and humanity united. The Eastern Orthodox emphasize "in two natures", while the Oriental Orthodox emphasize "from two natures" (St. Cyril's phrasing). But both reject Nestorian division and Eutychian confusion. There have even been joint statements from both traditions that say that both actually confess the same Christological faith, though in different expressions. So there is hope of a restoration of communion within the next generation or so (we pray!).

.

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from the surrounding villages, or Tikrit before the 1700s. In an attempt to fit in with the Arab Muslim culture around them, Sureth was gradually lost. Villages didn't have to deal with this because the population was entirely Sureth speakers. This was a common trend among most Assyrians who lived in Urban areas before the genocide, ex. Mardin.

.

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Ashur/Ashurism is not pagan.

Popular comment · Do you know the definition of "pagan"? It pretty much means "a person holding religious beliefs other than those of the main or recognized religions".

Since Ashurism is not a main religion in the world, it is by definition a pagan religion.

Love them or hate them, Christianity and Islam are NOT pagan religions, as they are major religions. As much as I dislike Islam, I won't call it a pagan religion and it will be silly to do so. What's wrong with "pagan" anyway? It's not even an insult. Early

Christians made it an insult for "nonbelievers". So why fall for their perspective when you just denigrated them in your previous reply? Lol...

.

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Not to be confused with Syriac Orthodox Church, Church of the East, or Ancient Church of the East.

Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East

The Patriarchal See of the Assyrian Church of the East in Kurdistan Region, Iraq

Abbreviation ACOE

Classification Christian

Orientation Syriac

Theology East Syriac theology

Catholicos-Patriarch Awa III[1]

Region Central Middle East, India; diaspora

Language Syriac,[2] Aramaic, Suret

Liturgy East Syriac Rite

Headquarters Ankawa, Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq

Absorbed Chaldean Syrian Church (1907)

Separations Chaldean Catholic Church (1830),

Ancient Church of the East (1968)
Members 500,000+[3]
Official website Official website
Part of a series on
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Language
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Subgroups
Citadel ChristiansMhallamiTribes
Religion
Ancient Church of the EastAssyrian Church of the EastAssyrian Evangelical ChurchAssyrian Pentecostal ChurchChaldean Catholic ChurchSyriac Catholic ChurchSyriac Orthodox Church
By location
Ethnic enclavesSettlements
Persecution
Assyrian genocideAnti-Assyrian sentimentHakkari massacresMassacres of Diyarbekir (1895)Simele massacreAssyrian exodus from Iraq
vte

The Assyrian Church of the East[a] (ACOE), sometimes called the Church of the East[5][6] and officially known as the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East,[5][7][b] is an Eastern Syriac Christian denomination that follows the traditional Christology and ecclesiology of the historical Church of the East.[9] It belongs to the eastern branch of Syriac Christianity, and employs the Divine Liturgy of Saints Addai and Mari belonging

to the East Syriac Rite. Its main liturgical language is Classical Syriac, a dialect of Eastern Aramaic. Officially known as the Church of the East until 1976, it was then renamed the Assyrian Church of the East,[10][11] with its patriarchate remaining hereditary until the death of Shimun XXI Eshai in 1975.

The Assyrian Church of the East is officially headquartered in the city of Erbil, in northern Iraq; its original area encompassed Iraq, southeastern Turkey, northeastern Syria and northwestern Iran, corresponding roughly to ancient Assyria. The current Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, Mar Awa III, was consecrated in September 2021.

The Assyrian Church of the East claims continuity with the historical Church of the East, and is not in communion with the Catholic, Oriental Orthodox or Eastern Orthodox churches.[c] The faction of the original Church of the East that came into full communion with the Holy See between the 16th and 19th centuries is the Chaldean Catholic Church, whose members are mostly ethnic Assyrians. After the Common Christological Declaration in 1994 between the Church of the East and the Catholic Church, and a 2001 theological dialogue between the churches, they drew up guidelines for the faithful to have mutual admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East.[12]

The Assyrian Church of the East has a traditional episcopal structure, headed by the Catholicos-Patriarch. Its hierarchy is composed of metropolitan bishops and diocesan bishops, while lower clergy consists of priests and deacons, who serve in dioceses (eparchies) and parishes throughout Western Asia, India, North America, Oceania, and Europe (including the Caucasus and Russia).[13]

History

A 6th-century Assyrian church, St. John the Arab, in the Assyrian village of Geramon
The Assyrian Church of the East considers itself as the continuation of the Church of the East, a church that originally developed among the Assyrians during the first century AD in Assyria, Upper Mesopotamia and northwestern Persia, east of the Byzantine Empire. It is an apostolic church established by Thomas the Apostle, Addai of Edessa, and Bartholomew the Apostle.

The distinction between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church resulted from the series of complex processes and events that occurred within the Church of the East during the transitional period that started in the middle of the 16th century, and lasted until the beginning of the 19th century.[14] That turbulent period was marked by several consequent splits and mergers, resulting in the creation of separate branches and rival patriarchal lines. During the entire period, one of the main questions of dispute was the union with the Catholic Church. Ultimately, the pro-Catholic branches were consolidated as the Chaldean Catholic Church, while the traditional branches were consolidated as the Assyrian Church of the East.[15]

Schisms and branches

Main articles: Church of the East and Schism of 1552

Mar Toma church near Urmia, Iran

During the patriarchal tenure of Shemon VII Ishoyahb (1539–1558), who resided in the ancient Rabban Hormizd Monastery near Alqosh, an internal dissent occurred over several issues, including the question of hereditary succession to the patriarchal throne, and the question of union with the Catholic Church. By that time, Franciscan missionaries had already gained some influence over several local communities,[16] and they took an active role in organizing the opposition to the patriarch at that time. By the end of 1552, a pro-Catholic party had been organized in Mosul under the leadership of the priest Yohannan Sulaqa,[17] who decided to legitimize his position by traveling to Rome and seeking confirmation by Pope Julius III (1550–1555).[18]

Receiving support from the Franciscan missionaries, he arrived in Rome and entered into full communion with the Catholic Church in February 1553. At that point, officials of the Roman Curia were given incorrect information that the elderly Patriarch Shemon VII had actually died. After some deliberation, the Roman pope decided to appoint Yohannan Sulaqa as "Patriarch of Babylon" and named the breakaway church as 'The Church of Assyria and Mosul' in April 1553.[19]

Upon consecration, Yohannan Sulaqa took the name Shimun and by the end of the year he returned to his homeland. He started to organize the pro-Catholic party by appointing several metropolitans and bishops.[18]

The senior Eliya line of Alqosh

Further information: Numeration of the Eliya line patriarchs

Union with Rome was actively opposed by Patriarch Shemon VII Ishoyahb, who continued to reside in the Rabban Hormizd Monastery near the ancient Assyrian town of Alqosh. He was succeeded by his nephew Eliya (1558–1591), who was designated as Eliya "VII" in older historiography,[20][21] but renumbered as Eliya "VI" in recent scholarly works.[22][23][24] The same renumbering was applied to his successors, who all took the same name thus creating the Eliya line. During his patriarchal rule, the Eliya line preserved its traditional christology and full ecclesiastical independence.[25] His successor was Patriarch Eliya VII (VIII) (1591–1617), who negotiated on several occasions with the Catholic Church, in 1605 and 1610, and again in 1615–1616, but without any conclusion.[26] Further negotiations were abandoned by the next Patriarch Eliya VIII (IX) (1617–1660).[27] David Wilmshurst noted that his successor, Patriarch Eliya IX (X) (1660–1700) also was a "vigorous defender of the traditional faith".[28]

The Eliya line of traditionalist patriarchs continued throughout the entire 18th century, residing in the ancient Monastery of Rabban Hormizd, which was eventually attacked and looted by muslim Turks in 1743, at the beginning of the Ottoman–Persian War (1743–1746).[29] Faced with a centuries-old rivalry and frequent conflicts between two

mighty Islamic empires (Ottoman and Persian), all Christian communities in the bordering regions were constantly exposed to danger – and not only in the times of war, since local, mainly Kurdish, warlords were accustomed to attacking Assyrian and Armenian Christian communities and monasteries and taking their land, often with Ottoman support. Patriarchs Eliya X (XI) (1700–1722) and Eliya XI (XII) (1722–1778) tried to improve the increasingly worsening position of their Christian flock by staying loyal to Ottoman authorities, but the local administration was frequently unable to provide effective protection.[30] The Eliya line of traditionalist patriarchs ended in 1804 with the death of Eliya XII (XIII) (1778–1804).[31][24]

The junior Shimun line of Qochanis

During the second half of the 16th century, traditionalist patriarchs of the Eliya line were faced with the continuous presence of the pro-Catholic movement, led by successors of Shimun VIII Yohannan Sulaqa. After his death in 1555, the newly established line of patriarchs who were united with the Catholic Church was continued by Abdisho IV Maron (1555–1570), who remained in full communion with the Catholic Church. He visited Rome and was officially confirmed by the Pope of Rome in 1562.[32] Soon after his death, connections with Rome were weakened for the first time during the tenure of Patriarch Yahballaha IV who did not seek confirmation from the pope.[33] That interlude was ended by his successor Shimun IX Dinkha (1580–1600) who restored full communion with the Catholic Church, and was officially confirmed by the Pope of Rome in 1584.[34]

After his death, the patriarchal office was made hereditary, and patriarchs of this line continued to use the name Shimun, thus creating the Shimun line. Hereditary succession was not acceptable to Rome, and during the tenure of the next Patriarch Shimun X Elijah (1600–1638) ties with the Catholic Church were loosened again. In 1616, Shimun X signed a traditional profession of faith that was not accepted by the Roman pope, leaving the patriarch without Rome's confirmation.[35] His successor Shimun XI Eshuyow (1638–1656) restored communion with the Catholic Church as late as 1653, eventually receiving confirmation from the pope.[28] By that time, the movement towards full commitment to the traditional faith was constantly growing stronger within the Shimun line. When the next Patriarch Shimun XII Yoalaha decided to send his profession of faith to the pope, he was deposed by his bishops because of his pro-Catholic attitude. The pope tried to intervene on his behalf, but without success.[28]

Final resolution of conflicts within the Shimun line occurred under the next Patriarch Shimun XIII Dinkha (1662–1700), who definitively broke communion with the Catholic Church. In 1670, he gave a traditionalist reply to an approach that was made from the Roman pope, and by 1672 all connections with the Catholic Church were terminated. [36][37] At the same time, Patriarch Shimun XIII moved his seat from Amid to Qochanis. After the final return to the traditional faith, patriarchs of the Shimun line decided to keep their independence and after that time there were two independent lines of traditional patriarchs: the senior Eliya line in Alqosh and the junior Shimun line in Qochanis.[38]

Such division was additionally caused by the complex structure of local Assyrian communities, traditionally organized as tribal confederations with each tribe being headed by a local lord (malik), while each malik was ultimately subject to the patriarch, who mediated between Christian Assyrians and the Ottoman authorities.[39]

Consolidation of remaining branches

Mar Elias (Eliya), the Nestorian bishop of the Urmia Plain village of Geogtapa, c. 1831. The image comes from *A Residence of Eight Years in Persia Among the Nestorians, with Notes of the Mohammedans* by Justin Perkins (Andover, 1843).

In 1780, at the beginning of the patriarchal tenure of Eliya XII (XIII) (1778–1804), a group seceded from the Eliya line in Alqosh and elected Yohannan Hormizd, who entered full communion with the Catholic Church and was officially appointed Archbishop of Mosul and patriarchal administrator of the Chaldean Catholic Church, in 1783. Only after the death in 1827 of the last representative of the Josephite line, Joseph V Augustine Hindi, was Yohannan recognized as the Chaldean Catholic patriarch by the pope, in 1830. By this official appointment, the final merger of various factions committed to the union with the Catholic Church was achieved, thus forming the modern Chaldean Catholic Church.

At the same time, the long coexistence and rivalry between two traditionalist patriarchal branches — the senior Eliya line of Alqosh and the junior Shimun line of Qodchanis — ended in 1804 when the last primate of the Eliya line, Patriarch Eliya XII (XIII) died and was buried in the ancient Rabban Hormizd Monastery. His branch decided not to elect a new patriarch, thus enabling the remaining patriarch Shimun XVI Yohannan (1780–1820) of the Shimun line to become the sole primate of both Assyrian traditionalist branches.[40][41][38] Consolidated after 1804, the reunited traditionalist church led by patriarchs of the Shimun line became widely known as the "Assyrian Church of the East". Still based in Qodchanis, Assyrian Patriarch Shimun XVI Yohannan was not able to secure control over the traditional seat of the former Eliya line in the ancient Rabban Hormizd Monastery; and around 1808 that venerated monastic institution passed to the Chaldean Catholics.[42]

The next Assyrian Patriarch Shimun XVII Abraham (1820–1861) also governed his church from Qodshanis. During years marked by political turbulence, he tried to maintain good relations with the local Ottoman authorities. In 1843, he was faced with renewed hostilities from Kurdish warlords, who attacked and looted many Christian villages, killing 10,000 Christian men and taking away women and children as captives. The patriarch himself was forced to take temporary refuge in Mosul.[43] He was succeeded by Patriarch Shimun XVIII Rubil (1861–1903) who also resided in Qodshanis. In 1869, he received an open invitation from the Vatican to visit Rome to attend the First Vatican Council as an observer, but he did not accept the invitation,[44] In following years, he also rejected other initiatives for union with the Catholic Church. [45]

Early 20th century Assyrian archbishop and servants

By the end of the 19th century, the Assyrian Church of the East consolidated itself as the sole representative of all traditionalist Assyrians. It also managed to secure a certain level of autonomy within the highly complex system of Ottoman local governance in the bordering regions.[46] On several occasions, Assyrian patriarchs refused to enter communion with the Catholic Church or merge with the Chaldean Catholic Church.[38] On the other hand, by the end of the 19th century some of its communities were converted to Protestantism by various western missionaries,[47] while other communities were drawn to Eastern Orthodoxy. That movement was led by Assyrian Bishop Mar Yonan of Supurghan in the region of Urmia who converted to Eastern Orthodoxy in 1898, through the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Urmia.[48]

20th and 21st centuries

St. Mary Assyrian Church in Moscow. In spite of both ethnic and religious persecution and a serious decline in membership since its height around the fourth century, the Assyrian Church of the East has survived into the 21st century.

Among all the tragedies and schisms which thinned the church out, no other was as severe as the Assyrian genocide. At that point the Assyrian Church of the East was based in the mountains of Hakkari, as it had been since 1681. In 1915, The Young Turks invaded the region—despite the Assyrians' plea of neutrality during the Caucasus campaign by Russia and their Armenian allies—out of fear of an Assyrian independence movement. In response to this, Assyrians of all denominations (the Assyrian Church of the East, the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Syriac Orthodox Church and Assyrian Protestants) entered into a war of independence and allied themselves with the United Kingdom, the Russian Empire and the Armenians against the Ottomans and their Islamic Kurdish, Iranian and Arab allies.[49]

Despite the odds, the Assyrians fought successfully against the Ottomans and their allies for three years throughout southeastern Turkey, northern Iraq, northwestern Iran and northeastern Syria. Eventually, however, they were abandoned by their allies, the Russian Empire and the First Republic of Armenia, due to the Russian Revolution and the collapse of the Armenian defense, leaving the Assyrians vastly outnumbered, surrounded, and cut off from supplies of ammunition and food. During this period, their See at Qodchanis was completely destroyed and the Turks and their Islamic allies massacred all of the Assyrians in the Hakkari Mountains.[50]

Those who survived fled into Iran with what remained of the Assyrian defense under Agha Petros, but they were pursued into Iranian territory despite the fact they were fleeing. Later, in 1918, after the murder of their de facto leader and Patriarch Shimun XIX Benyamin and 150 of his followers during a negotiation, fearing further massacres at the hands of the Turks and Kurds, most of the survivors fled by train from Iran into what was to become Iraq. They sought protection under the British mandate there, and joined the already existing indigenous Assyrian communities of both Eastern Orthodox

and Catholic rites in the north, where they formed communities in Baghdad, Basra, and other areas.[50]

Patriarch Shimun XXI Eshai

Main article: Shimun XXI Eshai

In the aftermath of World War I, the British-educated Patriarch Shimun XXI Eshai, born into the line of patriarchs at Qodchanis, had agitated for an independent Assyrian state. Following the end of the British mandate in 1933[50] and a massacre of Assyrian civilians at Simele by the Iraqi Army, the patriarch was forced to take refuge in Cyprus. [51] There, Shimun petitioned the League of Nations regarding his people's fate, but to little avail, and he was consequently barred from entering Syria and Iraq. He traveled through Europe before moving to Chicago in 1940 to join the growing Assyrian diaspora community there.[51]

Due to the church's and the general Assyrian community's disorganized state as a result of the conflicts of the 20th century, Patriarch Shimun XXI Eshai was forced to reorganize the church's structure in the United States. He transferred his residence to San Francisco in 1954, and was able to travel to Iran, Lebanon, Kuwait, and India, where he worked to strengthen the church.[52]

In 1964, the patriarch decreed a number of changes to the church, including liturgical reform, the adoption of the Gregorian calendar, and the shortening of Lent. These changes, combined with Shimun's long absence from Iraq, caused a rift in the community there, which led to another schism. In 1968, traditionalists within the church elected Thoma Darmo as a rival patriarch to Shimun XXI Eshai, forming the independent Ancient Church of the East, based in Baghdad, Iraq.[53]

In 1972, Shimun decided to step down as patriarch, and the following year he got married, in contravention to longstanding church custom. This led to a synod in 1973 in which further reforms were introduced, the most significant of which included the permanent abolition of hereditary succession — a practice introduced in the middle of the fifteenth century by Patriarch Shemon IV Basidi (who had died in 1497) — and it was also decided that Shimun should be reinstated. The second matter was supposed to be settled at another synod in 1975; however, Shimun was assassinated in November 1975 by an estranged relative before this could take place.[54]

Patriarch Dinkha IV

Main article: Dinkha IV

Mar Gewargis Assyrian Cathedral in Chicago: Former Patriarchal See

Almost a year after the death of Shimun, Mar Khnanya Dinkha, Metropolitan of Tehran, convened a synod of seven Assyrian bishops which took place at St Paul's Abbey, Alton, in England, from 12 to 17 October 1976. They were joined by two Church of England bishops, representing the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, and elected Dinkha as the 120th Catholicos-Patriarch of the Church of the East. On 17

October he was consecrated as Dinkha IV at St Barnabas Church, Ealing, in an area where many Assyrians lived.[55]

Dinkha, who was then aged 33, operated his see at Tehran until the Iran–Iraq War of 1980–1988, when he went into exile in the United States and transferred the Patriarchal See to Chicago.[56] Much of his patriarchate had been concerned with tending to the Assyrian diaspora community and with ecumenical efforts to strengthen relations with other churches.[56] On 26 March 2015, Dinkha IV died in the United States, leaving the Assyrian Church of the East in a period of sede vacante until 18 September 2015. During that time, Aprem Mooken served as the custodian of the Patriarchate of Seleucia-Ctesiphon.[57][58]

Patriarch Gewargis III

Main article: Gewargis III

On 18 September 2015, the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East elected the Metropolitan of Iraq, Jordan, and Russia, Warda Sliwa, to succeed the late Dinkha IV as Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. On 27 September 2015, he was consecrated as Catholicos-Patriarch in the Cathedral Church of St. John the Baptist, in Erbil, Iraq. Upon his consecration, he assumed the ecclesiastical name Gewargis III.

Mar Narsai Church in Nohadra

Church leaders proposed moving the Patriarchal See from Chicago back to Erbil.[59]

There have also been talks of reunification. In the Common Christological Declaration Between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East in 1994, the two churches recognized the legitimacy and rightness of each other's titles for Mary.[60]

In 2005, the Assyrian Church of the East had about 380,000 members,[61] mostly living in the United States, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey.[62][63]

Patriarch Awa III

Main article: Awa Royel

On 6 September 2021, Mar Gewargis III formally stepped down as Catholicos-Patriarch during an Extraordinary Session of the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East, leaving the Patriarchal See vacant. On 8 September 2021, the Holy Synod elected Mar Awa Royel, Bishop of California and Secretary of the Holy Synod, to succeed Mar Gewargis III as the 122nd Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East.[64] [65]

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Following doctrinal traditions of the ancient Church of the East, the modern Assyrian Church of the East recognizes the first two ecumenical councils: the First Council of Nicaea (325), and the First Council of Constantinople (381). The Assyrian Church follows trinitarian doctrines, expressed in the Nicene Creed, and professes the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father.[66]

Christology

Theologically, the Assyrian Church of the East does not accept doctrinal definitions that were adopted at the Council of Ephesus (431) and the Council of Chalcedon (451), and still adheres to the Church of the East's traditional Christology, that is often labeled as Nestorian. The use and exact meaning of that term has been the subject of many debates, not only throughout history but also in modern times, since the Assyrian Church of the East has distinctive views on several Christological questions and claims that its theological doctrines and traditions are essentially Orthodox, while admitting the need for further inter-Christian dialogue that would resolve various questions in the field of comparative Christological terminology.[67]

The Nestorian nature of Assyrian Christianity remains a matter of contention. Elements of Nestorian doctrine were explicitly repudiated by Patriarch Dinkha IV on the occasion of his accession in 1976.[68]

The Christology of the Church of the East has its roots in the Antiochene theological tradition of the early church. The founders of Assyrian theology are Diodorus of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia, both of whom taught at Antioch. "Antiochene" is a modern designation given to the style of theology associated with the early church at Antioch, as contrasted with the theology of the Church of Alexandria.[69]

Antiochene theology emphasizes Christ's humanity and the reality of the moral choices he faced. In order to preserve the impassibility of Christ's Divine Nature, the unity of his person is defined in a looser fashion than in the Alexandrian tradition.[69] The normative Christology of the Church of the East was written by Babai the Great (d. 628) during the controversy that followed the 431 Council of Ephesus. Babai held that within Christ there exist two qnôme (Syriac: ܩܢܳܡܳܐ / qnômâ, a complex term, equivalent for Greek term hypostasis), unmingled, but everlastingly united in the one prosopon (person) of Christ.

The precise Christological teachings of Nestorius are shrouded in obscurity. Wary of Monophysitism, Nestorius rejected Cyril's theory of a hypostatic union, proposing instead a much looser concept of prosopic union. Nestorianism has come to mean radical Dyophysitism,[70] in which Christ's two natures are eternally separate, though it is doubtful whether Nestorius ever taught such a doctrine. Nestorius' rejection of the term Theotokos ('God-bearer', or 'Mother of God') has traditionally been held as evidence that he asserted the existence of two persons (dyoprosopism) — not merely two natures — in Jesus Christ, but there exists no evidence that Nestorius denied Christ's oneness.[71] In the controversy that followed the Council of Ephesus, the term "Nestorian" was applied to all doctrine upholding a strictly Antiochene Christology. In consequence, the Church of the East was labelled Nestorian, though its official Christology was in fact defined by Babai the Great, at the council that was held in 612. [67]

Liturgy

The church employs the Syriac dialect of Eastern Aramaic in its liturgy, the East Syriac Rite, which includes three anaphoras, attributed to Addai of Edessa and Mari, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and later also Nestorius.[50]

Iconography

In their homes, Christians belonging to the Assyrian Church of the East hang a Christian cross (without the corpus) on the eastern wall of the main room.[72]

The Assyrian Church of the East does not make use of icons, and the interiors of its houses of worship are simple.[73] Iconography has been present in the Church of the East's history; opposition to religious images eventually became the norm due to the spread of Islam in the region, which forbade any type of depictions of saints and biblical prophets. Thus, the church was forced to get rid of her icons.[74][73]

A Nestorian Peshitta Gospel book written in Estrangela, from the 13th century, resides at the State Library of Berlin. This illustrated manuscript from Upper Mesopotamia or Tur Abdin proves that in the 13th century the church was not yet aniconic.[75] The Nestorian Evangelion preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de France contains an illustration depicting Jesus Christ (not a crucifix) in the circle of a ringed cross (in the form of Celtic cross) surrounded by four angels.[76]

Three Syriac manuscripts from the early 19th century and earlier—they were edited into a compilation titled *The Book of Protection* by Hermann Gollancz—contain a number of illustrations which are more or less crude. These manuscripts prove the continuous use of images. Moreover, a life-size male stucco figure was discovered in a church of Seleucia-Ctesiphon from the late 6th century. Beneath this church were found the remains of an earlier church. Although it cannot be determined which Nestorian Church was involved, the discovery nevertheless proves that the Church of the East also used figurative representations.[75]

Organization

See also: Dioceses of the Church of the East after 1552

Saint Mary Church: an ancient Assyrian church located in the city of Urmia, West Azerbaijan province, Iran

The Assyrian Church of the East is governed by an episcopal polity, the same as other apostolic churches. The church maintains a system of geographical parishes organized into dioceses and archdioceses. The Catholicos-Patriarch is the head of the church. Its synod is composed of bishops who oversee individual dioceses and metropolitans who oversee episcopal dioceses in their territorial jurisdiction.

The Chaldean Syrian Church, which encompasses India and the Persian Gulf, is the largest diocese of the church. Its history goes back to the Church of the East that established a presence in Kerala, but the two communities maintained only a sporadic connection for several centuries, and consistent relations were only established with the arrival of the Portuguese in India around 1500. The church is represented by the Assyrian Church of the East and is in communion with it.

Membership is estimated to 385,000 adherents,[61] although some[which?] sources say as high as 500,000.[77] According to scholar James Minahan around 19% of the Assyrian people belong to the Assyrian Church of the East.[78] In its own 2018 Report on Religious Freedom, the United States Department of State put the Assyrian Church of the East adherents at approximately 20% of the Christians in Iraq.[79]

Hierarchy

Residence of the Patriarch in Qudshanis, Ottoman Empire (1692–1918).

Due to the unstable political, religious and economic situation in the church's historical homeland of the Middle East, many of the church members now reside in Western countries. Churches and dioceses have been established throughout Europe, America, and Oceania.[13]

Archdioceses

Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon – established in October 1984.

Archdiocese of Syria – jurisdiction lies throughout all Syria, particularly in the al-Hasakah Governorate, where most of the community resides in al-Hasakah, Qamishli and the 35 villages along the Khabur River. There are also small communities in Damascus and Aleppo.

Archdiocese of India – the archdiocese's territory includes the city of Thrissur and surrounding, mostly in the state of Kerala.

Dioceses

An ancient Assyrian church in the city of Urmia, Iran

Saint Kirill Assyrian church in Dimitrov, Armenia

Saint Hurmizd cathedral in Greenfield Park, Sydney

Diocese of Iran – territory includes the capital Tehran, the Urmia and Salmas plains.

Diocese of Nohadra and Nineveh – established in 1999 with jurisdiction includes the indigenous communities of Dohuk and Nineveh.

Diocese of Bagdad, Russia and Georgia.

Diocese of Scandinavia and Germany – territory lies in western Europe and includes Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Finland and Norway.

Diocese of Eastern USA – formerly the patriarchal archdiocese from 1994 until 2012.

The territory includes the large Chicago, Illinois community, along with smaller parishes in Michigan, New England and New York.

Diocese of California – jurisdiction includes parishes in Western US and northern California. Some of the parishes are San Francisco, San Jose, Modesto, Turlock, Ceres, Seattle, and Sacramento.

Diocese of Western United States – jurisdiction includes parishes in Arizona and southern California (Los Angeles).

Diocese of Canada – includes the territory of Toronto, Windsor, Hamilton and all Canada.

Diocese of Victoria and New Zealand – includes Melbourne and New Zealand.

Diocese of Western Europe – territory lies in Western Europe and includes the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, the Netherlands and Greece.

Members of the Holy Synod

As of May 2024

Mar Awa III: 122nd Catholicos-Patriarch

Meelis Zaia: Metropolitan of Australia, New Zealand and Lebanon and Patriarchal Vicar General

Afram Athneil: Metropolitan of Syria

Awgin Kuriakose: Metropolitan of India and the Gulf Countries

Odisho Awraham: Bishop of Scandinavia and Germany

Narsai Benyamin: Bishop of Iran

Paulus Benjamin: Bishop of the Eastern United States

Abris Youkhannan: Bishop of Dohuk and Nineveh

Benyamin Elya: Bishop of Victoria and New Zealand and Secretary of the Holy Synod

Awraham Youkhanis:[80] Bishop of Western Europe

Elia Tamras:[81] Bishop of Baghdad, Ukraine and Georgia.

Retired:

Aprem Mookan: Metropolitan Emeritus of Malabar and India

Sargis Yosip: Bishop Emeritus of Baghdad

Aprim Khamis: Bishop Emeritus of the Western United States

Emmanuel Yosip: Bishop Emeritus of Canada

Ecumenical relations

On November 11, 1994, a historic meeting between Patriarch Dinkha IV and Pope John Paul II took place in Rome. Both signed a document titled "Common Christological

Declaration Between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East". One side effect of this meeting was that the Assyrian Church of the East's relationship with the fellow Chaldean Catholic Church began to improve.[82]

The Assyrian Church of the East was never admitted a full member of the Middle East Council of Churches, due to the Coptic Orthodox Church accusing the Assyrian Church of the East to be Nestorian, and thus, heretical.[6]

The lack of a coherent institution narrative in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, which dates to apostolic times, has caused many Western Christians, and especially Roman Catholics, to doubt the validity of this anaphora, used extensively by the Assyrian Church of the East, as a prayer of consecration of the eucharistic elements. In 2001, after a study of this issue, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI), then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, promulgated a declaration approved by Pope John Paul II stating that this is a valid anaphora. This declaration opened the door to a joint synodal decree officially implementing the present Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East.[83]

See also

icon Christianity portal

Abda of Hira

Chaldean Syrian Church in India (also known as Assyrian Church of the East in India)

Church of the East in China

Common Christological Declaration Between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East

Dioceses of the Church of the East to 1318

Dioceses of the Church of the East, 1318–1552

Dioceses of the Church of the East after 1552

List of patriarchs of the East

List of Assyrian settlements

List of Assyrian tribes

Notes

Classical Syriac: ܬܬܐܢܬܐ ܕܡܕܢܗܐ ܕܐܬܘܪܝܐ, romanized: ʿĒdā d-Madnḥā d-ʾĀtūrāyē;[4]

Arabic: كنيسة المشرق الآشورية[4]

Classical Syriac: ܬܬܐܢܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܩܬܠܝܩܝܐ ܕܡܕܢܗܐ ܕܐܬܘܪܝܐ, romanized: ʿĒdā Qaddīštā wa-Šlīḥāytā Qātōlīqī d-Madnḥā d-ʾĀtūrāyē; Arabic: كنيسة المشرق

الآشورية الرسولية الجاثليقية المقدسة[8]

الآشورية الرسولية الجاثليقية المقدسة[8]

The Assyrian Church of the East allows communion with all baptised Christians.

However, this open communion is not mutual with the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox or Oriental Orthodox churches.

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Tisserant 1931, p. 261-263.

Fiey 1993, p. 37.

Murre van den Berg 1999a, p. 243-244.

Baum & Winkler 2003, p. 116, 174.

Hage 2007, p. 473.

Wilmshurst 2000, p. 22, 42 194, 260, 355.

Wilmshurst 2000, p. 24.

Wilmshurst 2000, p. 24-25.

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Wilmshurst 2000, p. 205, 263.

Wilmshurst 2000, p. 28, 195, 242, 250–251, 355.

Wilmshurst 2000, p. 263.

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 Wilmshurst 2000, p. 25, 316.
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[Islamic magick \(non-Sufi\)](#) is a complex topic where mainstream Islam strictly forbids magic (sihr) as disbelief (shirk), viewing it as Satanic, but acknowledges ruqyah

(Quranic healing) and practices involving sacred names/talismans (often tied to jinn) that some scholars permit for protection, though this blurs lines with forbidden arts, especially those involving darker spirits or coercion, often linked to ancient Egyptian/Persian traditions, making "non-Sufi" magic a fringe, often illicit, pursuit.

Forbidden Magic (Sihr)

Definition: Seeking power from anything other than Allah, involving demons, curses, or controlling others.

Islamic View: Major sin (shirk), disbelief (kufr), leading to hellfire.

Examples: Black magic, witchcraft, fortune-telling, manipulating jinn.

Permitted/Licit Practices (Often Misunderstood as Magic)

Ruqyah: Healing using Quranic verses, supplications (du'a), and seeking refuge in Allah.

Sacred Names/Talismans (Ta'wiz): Using Allah's names, Quranic verses, or angelic names for protection against evil eye, sickness, or jinn.

Spiritual Warfare: Using prayer and faith (tawakkul) against magic's effects.

The Gray Area & Non-Sufi Practices

Ancient Roots: Some practices draw from pre-Islamic traditions (e.g., Egyptian) where spirits were controlled.

Jinn Manipulation: "Licit" vs. "illicit" magic often hinges on whether benevolent (angels, righteous jinn) or malevolent (demons) entities are invoked.

Non-Sufi: While Sufis often engage in spiritual disciplines, "non-Sufi" magic often refers to folk practices, talismans, or esoteric systems (like the Shams al-Ma'arif) that use Islamic symbols but operate outside mainstream theology, sometimes bordering on or fully entering forbidden sihr.

Key Distinction

Islam emphasizes Tawhid (Oneness of God): Any practice that suggests another power can grant wishes or cause harm, even with Islamic symbols, is problematic. True strength comes from Allah alone, through prayer and adherence to scripture, not magical control.

Islam and magic - Wikipedia

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Mufti Menk warns of the dangers of magic, which can lead to disbelief and separation from Allah. He advises reading Quranic verses for protection and seeking forgiveness.

Should Muslims Believe in Black Magic? | Dr. Shabir Ally

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Muslims have varying beliefs about black magic. Some believe it exists and can harm people, while others believe it's just a psychological trick.

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Sri Yantra by Harish Johari using traditional colors

Unalome is the sacred Yantra used widely in Southeast Asian Buddhism
Yantra (Sanskrit: यन्त्र, romanized: yantrá, lit. 'machine, contraption'[1]) is a geometrical diagram, mainly from the Tantric traditions of the Indian religions. Yantras are used for the worship of deities in temples or at home; as an aid in meditation; and for the benefits believed given by their occult powers based on Hindu astrology and tantric texts. They are also used for adornment of temple floors, due mainly to their aesthetic and symmetric qualities. Specific yantras are traditionally associated with specific deities and/or certain types of energies used for accomplishment of certain tasks or vows that may be either materialistic or spiritual in nature. They become a prime tool in certain sadhanas performed by the sadhaka, the spiritual seeker. Yantras hold great importance in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism.

Representations of the yantra in India have been considered to date back to 11,000–10,000 BCE.[2] The Baghor stone, found in an Upper Paleolithic context in the Son River Valley, is considered the earliest example[3] by G. R. Sharma, who was involved in the excavation of the stone (it was dated to 25,000–20,000 BCE). The triangular stone, which includes triangular engravings on one side, was found daubed in ochre in what was considered a site related to worship. Worship of goddesses in that region was found to be practiced in a similar manner to the present day.[4] Kenoyer, who was also involved in the excavation, considered it to be associated with Shakti. This triangular shape looks very much similar to Kali Yantra and Muladhara Chakra.[5]

Mantras, the Sanskrit syllables inscribed on yantras, are essentially "thought forms" representing divinities or cosmic powers that exert their influence by means of sound-vibrations.[6]

Etymology

In Rigvedic Sanskrit, yantra meant an instrument for restraining or fastening, a prop, support, or barrier, etymologically deriving from the root yam, "to sustain, support" and the -tra suffix, expressing instrumentation. The literal meaning is still evident in the medical terminology of Sushruta, where the term refers to blunt surgical instruments

such as tweezers or a vice. The meaning of "mystical or occult diagram" arises in the medieval period (Kathasaritsagara, Pancharatra).[7]

Usage and meaning

Yantras are usually associated with a particular deity and are used for specific benefits, such as: for meditation; protection from harmful influences; development of particular powers; attraction of wealth or success, etc.[8] For instance, the Sivali yantra, used mainly in Southeast Asian Buddhism, is used for the attraction of wealth and good luck. [citation needed] They are often used in daily ritual worship at home or in temples, and sometimes worn as a talisman.[9]

As an aid to meditation (meditative painting), yantras represent the deity that is the object of meditation. These yantras emanate from the central point, the bindu. A yantra typically has several geometric shapes radiating concentrically from the center, including triangles, circles, hexagons, octagons, and symbolic lotus petals. The outside often includes a square representing the four cardinal directions, with doors to each. A popular form is the Sri Chakra, or Sri Yantra, which represents the goddess in her form as Tripura Sundari. Sri Chakra also includes a representation of Shiva, and is designed to show the totality of creation and existence, along with the user's own unity with the cosmos.[9]

Yantras can be on a flat surface or three-dimensional. They can be drawn or painted on paper, engraved on metal, or any flat surface. They tend to be smaller in size than the similar mandala, traditionally with less color.[10]

Occult yantras are used as good luck charms, to ward off evil, as preventative medicine, in exorcism, etc., by virtue of magical power. When used as talismans, yantras are viewed as representing a deity who can be called on at will by the user. They are traditionally consecrated and energized by a priest, including the use of mantras closely associated with the specific deity and yantra. Practitioners believe that a yantra that is not energized with a mantra is lifeless.[9] In Sri Lankan Buddhism, practitioners are required to have the yantra of the deity with them, once the deity has shown acceptance of their prayer.[citation needed]

Gudrun Bühnemann classifies three general types of yantras based on their usage:

Yantras that are used as foundation for ritual implements such as lamps or vessels. These are typically simple geometric shapes upon which the implements are placed. Yantras used in regular worship, such as the Sri Yantra. These include geometric diagrams energized with mantras to the deity, and sometimes include written mantras in the design.

Yantras used in specific desire-oriented rites. These are often made on birch bark or paper, and can include special materials such as flowers, rice paste, or ashes.[10]

Structural elements and symbolism

Kali yantra

The yantra of Matangi, the tantric Saraswati

A yantra comprises geometric shapes, images, and written mantra. Triangles and hexagrams are common, as are circles and lotuses of 4 to 1,000 petals. Saiva and Shakti yantras often feature the prongs of a trishula.[11]

Mantra

Yantras frequently include mantras written in Sanskrit.

Use of colors in traditional yantra is entirely symbolic, and not merely decorative or artistic. Each color is used to denote ideas and inner states of consciousness.

White/Red/Black is one of the most significant color combinations, representing the three qualities or gunas of nature (prakriti). White represents sattwa or purity; red represents rajas or the activating quality; black represents tamas or the quality of inertia. Specific colors also represent certain aspects of the goddess. Not all texts give the same colors for yantras. Aesthetics and artistry are meaningless in a yantra if they are not based on the symbolism of the colors and geometric shapes.[12]

Bindu

The central point of traditional yantras have a bindu or point, which represents the main deity associated with the yantra. The retinue of the deity is often represented in the geometric parts around the center. The bindu in a yantra may be represented by a dot or small circle, or may remain invisible. It represents the point from which all of creation emanates. Sometimes, as in the case of the Linga Bhairavi yantra, the bindu may be presented in the form of a linga.[13]

Trikonā

Most Hindu yantras include trikonā (triangles). Downward-pointing triangles represent the feminine aspect of God or Shakti, while upward-pointing triangles represent God's masculine aspect, as in Shiva.

Satkonā

Satkonās or Hexagrams as shown in yantras are two equilateral triangles intertwined, representing the union of male and female aspects of divinity, or Shiva and Shakti.

Lotus (Kamal)

Mandalas and yantras both frequently include lotus petals, which represent purity and transcendence. Eight-petaled lotuses are common, but lotuses in yantras can include 2, 4, 8, 10, 12, 16, 24, 32, 100, 1000 or more petals.

Circle (Gola)

Many mandalas have three concentric circles in the center, representing manifestation.

Outer square

Many mandalas have an outer square or nested squares, representing the earth and the four cardinal directions. Often they include sacred doorways on each side of the square or Chakorā.

Panchkonā

Yantras infrequently use a Panchkonā (pentagram). Some yantras of Guhyakali have a pentagram, due to the number five being associated with Kali.

Ashtakonā

Ashtakonās or octagons are also infrequent in yantras, where they represent the eight directions.[11]

Yantra designs in modern times have deviated from the traditional patterns given in ancient texts and traditions. Designers in the west may copy design elements from Nepali/tantric imitations of yantras.[14]

Yantra tattooing

Main article: Yantra tattooing

Cambodian monk covered in yantra tattoos

Yantra Tattooing or Sak Yuant is a form of tattooing using yantra designs in Buddhism. It consists of sacred geometrical, animal and deity designs accompanied by Pali phrases that are said to offer power, protection, fortune, charisma and other benefits for the bearer. Sak yant designs are normally tattooed by ruesi, wicha practitioners, and Buddhist monks or Brahmin priests, traditionally with a metal rod sharpened to a point (called a khem sak).[15]

Yantra drawing

The world's largest Sri Chakra, measuring 67,400 sq ft was drawn on ground in Cranbury, New Jersey under the guidance of Guru Karunamaya.[16]

Gallery

Yan Paet-thit, a Thai yantra tattoo

Yan Paet-thit, a Thai yantra tattoo

Traditional engraved copper Sri Yantra

Traditional engraved copper Sri Yantra

Yantra of Paramashiva, with trident

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Inner Alchemy (Neidan): Focuses on internal cultivation, using the body's own energies rather than external elixirs, to achieve spiritual goals.

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Yin & Yang: The complementary forces of the universe; imbalance leads to illness, balance fosters spiritual growth.

Qi (Energy) & Shen (Spirit/Mind): Cultivating and circulating vital energy (Qi) and consciousness (Shen) is central.

Dantian (Elixir Field): The energy center, often in the lower abdomen, where cultivation begins.

Other Important Texts & Traditions:

Classic of Purity (Qing Jing Jing): Focuses on emptiness and stillness as the path to purity.

Tao Te Ching & Zhuangzi: Foundational Daoist texts, providing philosophical basis for balancing self with the Tao.

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Manuscript fragments of the Merlin legend now published ...

"The Red Serpent (Manuscript fragments)" likely refers to fictional elements in books or games, such as the "Serpent Papers" in Jessica Cornwell's novel involving alchemical secrets, or fragments found in the game Genshin Impact during the Enkanomiya quest "The Trail of Drake and Doubters" (part of the "Before the Sun's Return" storyline), often featuring illuminated serpents in real medieval documents that inspire such tales.

In Gaming (Genshin Impact):

"The Trail of Drake and Doubters": Players collect three fragments in Enkanomiya by solving puzzles and fighting enemies (wolves, Pyro Lectors) to give to an NPC named Ru, uncovering lore.

In Literature (Fictional):

"The Serpent Papers" by Jessica Cornwell: A novel featuring a palimpsest (reused parchment) called the "Serpent Papers," containing clues from alchemical texts related to medieval philosophy (Ramon Llull) and esoteric verse, central to a murder mystery.

In Real-World History/Art (Inspiration):

Illuminated Manuscripts: Medieval charters, like one from 1402 at Trinity College Dublin, sometimes feature letters (like 'S') illuminated as red serpents or dragons, inspiring fictional "red serpent" motifs in media.

So, depending on where you encountered the term, it's either a quest item, a plot device in a thriller, or a reference to historical manuscript art.

Enkanomiya: Gather 3 Fragments - The Trail of Drake and ...

Jan 5, 2022 — hi everyone this is part four of my Ankenomia series and the sub quest trail of Drake and Serpent come to this waypoint...

YouTube

·Cookies Gaming

6:26

The Serpent Papers by Jessica Cornwell review – murder and medieval intrigue | Thrillers | The Guardian

Jan 20, 2015 — The palimpsest, also known as the "Serpent Papers", is a page from an ancient scroll or book where the original text h...

The Guardian

The Double Headed Serpent of Swords! the letter "S" has been ...

Nov 30, 2025 — the letter "S" has been illuminated as a red serpent or dragon in a charter from 1402 which records a grant of land...

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Reddit · r/WhereWindsMeet

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4 answers

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YouTube · Gaming with Abyss

26.8K+ views · 3 years ago

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3 key moments in this video

Gather the three fragments | Quest Guide | Genshin Impact

YouTube · Boyka Gacha

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18 key moments in this video

The Red Serpent: Background

Tumblr

[https://www.tumblr.com › wilsondownes › the-red-serp...](https://www.tumblr.com/wilsondownes/the-red-serp...)

This is the Background to the 13 chapters of the book Discovering the Keystone, Solving the Riddle of The Red Serpent after 40 years by Guillaume Brouillard.

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2 key moments in this video

For #ManuscriptMonday we have a thread from the ...

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1 comment · 5 years ago

Lord Enki was well aware of this sensuality. And, he was ... Red Serpent, appear before me in comely form..." Used for lust magic ...

Gather The Three Fragments- Enkanomia | The Subterranean ...

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The Green Dragon (Le Dragon Vert)

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"The Green Dragon (Le Dragon Vert)" refers to various mythical, fantasy, and artistic depictions of green dragons, known for embodying nature, poison, and cunning, appearing in Dungeons & Dragons, Dragon City, Celtic lore (as the Green Serpent), and art by figures like Salvador Dalí, symbolizing themes of life, evil, or springtime.

This video provides a brief introduction to the concept of a green dragon:

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David Arkenstone - Topic

YouTube • Jun 9, 2022

In Fantasy & Games:

Dungeons & Dragons (D&D): A classic chromatic dragon, inherently evil, known for their poisonous breath, love of forests, and manipulative nature, often associated with nature's darker, deceptive side.

Dragon City: A collectible dragon with distinct stages (egg, baby, young, adult), obtainable through events and summoning, featuring teal and green wings.

Magic: The Gathering (MTG): Features "Green Dragon" cards (like Dragon vert) in sets like Adventures in the Forgotten Realms, often with poison-related abilities.

Watch the trailer for the movie Green Dragon (2001):

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Morgan Creek

YouTube • Nov 8, 2018

Cultural & Artistic Meanings:

Symbolism: Represents nature, rebirth, the East (in Chinese lore), and sometimes chaotic or destructive aspects of nature, notes The Circle of the Dragon.

Art: Salvador Dalí created an etching and aquatint titled Le Dragon Vert (The Green Dragon).

Fairy Tales: "The Green Serpent" (Le Serpentin Vert) is a French fairy tale by Marie.

Key Characteristics (General Fantasy):

Element: Often associated with poison or acid, rather than fire.

Habitat: Lush forests, swamps, or ancient ruins.

Personality: Cunning, greedy, and treacherous.

In essence, the "Green Dragon" is a versatile archetype symbolizing nature's power, both beautiful and deadly, across various media.

Green Dragon - Dragon City Wiki

Appearance * Egg. The egg has a golden with green badge on the egg. There is a bit of blue hair at the top of the egg and looked l...

Dragon City Wiki

Green Dragon - Monster Wiki

Green dragons are a breed of chromatic dragons from the Dungeons & Dragons roleplaying game. Like all chromatic dragons, greens ar...

Monster Wiki | Fandom

Dragon vert - Adventures in the Forgotten Realms - Scryfall

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The Green Dragon (Le Dragon Vert) from doubletakeart.com

The Green Serpent

Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Green_Serpent

Le Serpentin Vert (translated as Green Serpent or Green Dragon) is a French fairy tale written by Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy, The serpent is representative of a ...

The Green Dragon (Le Dragon Vert) from en.wikipedia.org

Dragon vert MTG - Adventures in the Forgotten Realms ...

Magic: The Gathering Card Database

<https://gatherer.wizards.com/fr-fr/green-dragon>

Official MTG details and rulings for Dragon vert, Creature – Dragon from AFR (186) (Français). Read official rules and rulings directly from Magic: The ...

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Facebook · Richard Fierce, Author

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Green Dragon Price | mtg

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Twilit Grotto -- Esoteric Archives
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What is the Testament of Solomon?

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Testament of Solomon - Religion of Abraham

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2017

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<https://zeroequalstwo.net> › hygromanteia

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AI Overview

"Le Dragon Vert" (The Green Dragon) refers to several things, including a classic French fairy tale ("Le Serpentin Vert"), an art piece by Salvador Dalí, various books by authors like Jacques Goldstyn, a comic book character (Sarah Spits), and even a fantasy tavern in Lord of the Rings lore, generally representing a mythical green dragon in French or fantasy contexts, often a transformed prince or a powerful magical being.

Here's a breakdown of common meanings:

Fairy Tale: In Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's 1698 tale, Le Serpentin Vert, the Green Dragon is a handsome king under a spell, with green wings and fiery eyes, similar to Eros and Psyche.

Art: Salvador Dalí created a limited-edition etching and aquatint print titled Le Dragon Vert.

Books: Jacques Goldstyn wrote a children's book called Le Dragon Vert, and there's a French edition of a book by Oscar Goldstein.

Comics: Marc Wasterlain wrote and illustrated a story called Le dragon vert within the Sarah Spits comic series.

Fantasy: In The Lord of the Rings fandom (Fandom Wiki), "Dragon Vert" can refer to the Green Dragon Inn in the fictional town of Bree.

Essentially, it's a popular French phrase for a green dragon, appearing across different media and stories.

Le Dragon Vert by Jacques Goldstyn | Goodreads

Mar 31, 2015 — Le Dragon Vert by Jacques Goldstyn | Goodreads. Le Dragon Vert. Jacques Goldstyn. 4.67. 6 ratings1 review. Softcover. ...

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Bibliographic information ; Title, Le dragon vert. Volume 88 of Bande dessinée adulte, Série bleue ; Publisher, Éditions Elvifrance, 1982 ; Length, 194 pages.

Le Dragon Vert by Jacques Goldstyn

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The full sigil of Lucifer, as it originally appeared in the Grimorium Verum
The Grimorium Verum (Latin for True Grimoire) is an 18th-century grimoire attributed to one "Alibeck the Egyptian" of Memphis, who purportedly wrote it in 1517. Like many grimoires, it claims a tradition originating with King Solomon.

The grimoire is not a translation of an earlier work as purported, its original appearing in French or Italian in the mid-18th century, as noted already by A. E. Waite who discussed the work in his *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* (1911), stating:

The date specified in the title of the Grimorium Verum is undeniably fraudulent; the work belongs to the middle of the eighteenth century, and Memphis is Rome.

One version of the Grimoire was included as *The Clavicles of King Solomon: Book 3* in one of the French manuscripts S. L. MacGregor Mathers incorporated in his version of the *Key of Solomon*, but it was omitted from the *Key* with the following explanation:[1]

At the end there are some short extracts from the Grimorium Verum with the Seals of evil spirits, which, as they do not belong to the *Key of Solomon* proper, I have not given. For the evident classification of the *Key* is in two books and no more.

Idries Shah also published some of it in *The Secret Lore of Magic: Book of the Sorcerers* in 1957.

Contents of the book

Book one

"Concerning the character of demons"[2] In particular the superior spirits of Lucifer, Beelzebub, Astaroth, including the many inferior spirits below them and their invoking sigils.

Book two

"Of planetary hours"[2]

Book three

"The preparation of the operator"[2]

Book four

"Here begins the Sanctum Regnum, called the royalty of spirits, or the Little Key of Solomon, a most learned Hebraic necromancer and Rabbi. This book contains various combinations of characters whereby the powers can be invoked or brought forth whensoever you may wish, each according to his faculty."[2]

Editions

Trident Books (1994, 2nd. ed. 1997) ISBN 1-879000-03-2

Joseph H. Peterson (2007) ISBN 978-1-4348-1116-5

Jake Stratton-Kent (2009). *Scarlet Imprint*. ISBN 978-0-9567203-2-0.

Tarl Warwick (2015). ISBN 978-1-5192-0928-3.

References

Joseph H Peterson, *Grimorium Verum*, ISBN 978-1-4348-1116-5, Appendix 1, "Excerpts from *Grimorium Verum* from British Library manuscript Lansdowne 1202", pp. 79.

Warwick, Tarl (2015). *Grimorium Verum: The True Grimoire* (Illustrated ed.). CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. ISBN 9781519209283. Retrieved 14 March 2019.

External links

Grimorium verum (partial) at Esoteric Archives

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This article about a non-fiction book on occultism is a stub. You can help Wikipedia by expanding it.

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[Magical Treatise of Solomon](#)

15th century Greek manuscript, now at the British Library, London

AuthorUnknown

Language Medieval Greek

Genre Grimoire

The Magical Treatise of Solomon,[1][2] also known as the Hygromanteia (Greek: Ὑγρομαντεία)[a] or Solomonikê (Greek: Σολωμωνική),[4][b] is a collection of late Byzantine grimoires. A pseudepigraphon, the book was written in medieval Greek and purports to contain Solomon's instructions to his son Rehoboam on various magical techniques and tools. It includes guides on how to summon and control spirits and their powers, instructions on the selection of charms and the magical uses of herbs, as well as different means of divination and astrological beliefs. The Magical Treatise survives in fragments from a number of manuscripts dating from the 15th century CE. The book has been important for the history of European magic, serving as a link between the earlier Greek magical practices and the later grimoires of Western Europe. During the early modern period, the book began to be translated in Latin, becoming the source for future European grimoires, most notably the Key of Solomon.[7][5]

History

Composition

The oldest preserved manuscripts of the Magical Treatise date from the 14th century, and the majority from the 15th century CE. Torijano (2002) asserts that the text originates from the early Byzantine period and it might have been composed in Italy, as the Greek text appears to be particularly well-composed and it shows some Italian influence.[8] He further suggests that, due to the lack of obvious signs of Christianization in the text, the work preserves much older material that could go as far back as the early centuries of the common era;[8] a theory that is either accepted[4] or at least regarded as plausible. Marathakis (2011) writes that if, according to Torijano, the text was first composed in Italy, it would have been some time between the 6th and 11th centuries, when parts of Italy were under Byzantine rule. Nevertheless, Marathakis finds it more probable that the work was in fact composed in Venetian-ruled Crete some time between the 13th or 14th centuries.[9] McCown argued that the book was known to Byzantine scholars prior to the 13th century based on Niketas Choniates' reference of a certain "Solomonic book", which allowed sorcerers to summon demons in legions. Marathakis notes that, except for the Magical Treatise, this description also fits the earlier Testament of Solomon, which could be the book that Choniates was referring to instead.[10]

Influence

The Magical Treatise of Solomon served as a bridge connecting the magical practices of late antiquity and the Middle Ages with the later European grimoires of the Renaissance, the most widely known being the Key of Solomon.[11] Early copies of the Magical Treatise were appended to or incorporated elements of the Roman-era Testament of Solomon.[12][13] Portions of the Treatise also select ideas which may bear distant relationships to the Book of Abramelin,[14][4] the Greek Magical Papyri (particularly the "Sword of Dardanus"), Sefer Raziel HaMalakh, Sepher Ha-Razim, the Sword of Moses, [15] and the Cyranides.[16]

The Magical Treatise itself has been an important source of material for the Key of Solomon, from which a number of European grimoires later derived.[7] The introduction of the Magical Treatise in the Italian peninsula likely occurred after the sack of Constantinople by the Ottomans, which caused a wave of scholars to migrate to Italy, bringing with them a large number of Greek manuscripts for safety. Among those manuscripts, their Hygromanteia would almost certainly be included.[17] As a result of the close affinity between the two works, the Greek Magical Treatise is sometimes regarded as the earliest copy of the Key of Solomon before its translation into Latin in the 16th century.[5] Similarly, one of the earliest manuscripts of the Key of Solomon is also classified as a late copy of the Magical Treatise.[18] Some manuscripts of the Treatise featured demons assigned to the four cardinal directions, distinct from those found in the Lesser Key of Solomon and related works, but very similar to those found in later works such as the Grand Grimoire and Grimoirium Verum.[19] Portions of the Treatise also have some relationship to the Heptameron of Pietro d'Abano, the Lesser Key of Solomon, and the Sworn Book of Honorius.[20]

Contents

The Magical Treatise provides instructions on how to create planetary, daily, and hourly talismans,[21] a magic sword, vessels for divination and conjuration, wax figures, scrolls (written in the blood of a bat), a ring, special clothing, and a garland, all intended to control summoned spirits.[22] Angelic conjurations, general prayers to God, and prayers to control planetary influences are listed. Astrological beliefs, including supposed relationship between planets and select plants, are presented as esoteric knowledge. Different angels and demons over different planets, days, and hours are named, as well as what function they perform,[23][24] although the lists are mostly unique to each manuscript.[25] Angels mentioned include Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael, and Anael. Demons mentioned include Asmodeus, Abizouth, Oniskeliá, Lucifer (as Loutzipher), Astaroth, and Beelzebub.[26]

Editions

The Magical Treatise of Solomon, or Hygromanteia; Trans. & Ed. Ioannis Marathakis, Fore. Stephen Skinner; Golden Hoard Press, 2011.[1]

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Greek pronunciation: [iyroman'dia], lit. 'liquid divination'; anglicized as the Hygromancy of Solomon.[3]

Greek pronunciation: [solomoni'ki]; Sometimes also found as the Little Key of the Whole Art of Hygromancy, Found by Several Craftsmen and by the Holy Prophet Solomon.[5]

[6]

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AI Overview

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Taoist alchemy texts, like the renowned Secret of the Golden Flower (SGF), are spiritual manuals detailing inner alchemy (Neidan) for achieving enlightenment, immortality, or spiritual rebirth through cultivating vital energies (Qi, Shen) and balancing Yin/Yang, often using meditation and breathwork to "turn the light around" to reveal one's true spiritual essence (the "golden flower"). SGF, translated by Richard Wilhelm with commentary by C.G. Jung, synthesizes Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian ideas, focusing on transforming dense lower soul (yin) into clear spiritual light (yang) for spiritual transformation.

Key Concepts in SGF & Daoist Alchemy:

Inner Alchemy (Neidan): Focuses on internal cultivation, using the body's own energies rather than external elixirs, to achieve spiritual goals.

The Golden Flower: A metaphor for the radiant, luminous spiritual essence or primordial awareness within.

Turning the Light Around (Huan Yuan): A core practice of focusing consciousness inward, circulating spiritual light (Shen) to unify Yin and Yang energies.

Yin & Yang: The complementary forces of the universe; imbalance leads to illness, balance fosters spiritual growth.

Qi (Energy) & Shen (Spirit/Mind): Cultivating and circulating vital energy (Qi) and consciousness (Shen) is central.

Dantian (Elixir Field): The energy center, often in the lower abdomen, where cultivation begins.

Other Important Texts & Traditions:

Classic of Purity (Qing Jing Jing): Focuses on emptiness and stillness as the path to purity.

Tao Te Ching & Zhuangzi: Foundational Daoist texts, providing philosophical basis for balancing self with the Tao.

The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine (Huangdi Neijing): Discusses Qi, meridians, and health, foundational to internal practices.

Key Texts & Figures:

Richard Wilhelm & C.G. Jung: Wilhelm's translation of SGF (1929) introduced it to the West, profoundly influencing Jung and Western psychology.

The Golden Elixir (Jindan): Refers to the ultimate goal of alchemy, the perfected spirit or immortal body, also a key concept in SGF.

These texts describe methods like abdominal breathing, focusing awareness in the heart, and circulating light to achieve profound spiritual states, health, and longevity, bridging ancient Chinese wisdom with modern understanding of consciousness.

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The Testament of Solomon is a pseudepigraphical composite text ascribed to King Solomon but not regarded as canonical scripture by Jews or Christian groups. It was written in the Greek language, based on precedents dating back to the early 1st millennium AD, but was likely not completed in any meaningful textual sense until sometime in the Middle Ages.^{[1][2]} In its most noteworthy recensions, the text describes how Solomon was enabled to build his temple by commanding demons by means of a magical ring that was entrusted to him by the archangel Michael.

Dating and authorship

Scholarly opinion on when the Testament of Solomon was written varies widely.

Suggested dates for its composition range between the end of the 1st century AD and the High Middle Ages.^{[1][2]} Also disputed is whether it had a Christian or Jewish origin.

Mid-twentieth century scholarship tended to agree that much of its content "reflects the first-century Judaism in Israel" and includes material much earlier than its composition.

^[3] However, scholars both before (e.g., Istrin)^[4] and after (e.g., Schwarz)^[1] proposed other solutions based upon the varied manuscript evidence. Because of the text's various forms, produced over centuries by distinct scribes, the author or authors of the text remain unknown. The text was originally written in Greek and contains numerous theological and magical themes ranging from Christianity and Judaism to Greek mythology and astrology that possibly hint at a Christian writer with a Greek background.

Contents

See also: Seal of Solomon

When a demon named Ornias harasses a young man (who is favored by Solomon) by stealing half of his pay and sucking out his vitality through the thumb on his right hand, Solomon prays in the temple and receives from the archangel Michael a magic ring (containing the name that brings all demons into subjection, Ahayah Ashar Ahayah) (as quoted as the Highest name of God according to the masons as well as the illuminatist), which enables him to command the demons. Solomon has the young man throw the ring at the demon Ornias, which stamps him with the seal and brings him under control. Then Solomon orders the demon Ornias to take the ring and similarly imprint the prince of demons, Beelzebul.

With Beelzebul under his command, Solomon now has all of the demons at his bidding to build the temple. Beelzebul reveals that he was formerly the highest ranking angel in Heaven.

In chapter 18, the demons of the 36 decans appear, with names that sometimes seem to be conscious distortions of the traditional names for the decans.[5][6] The decan demons claim responsibility mostly for various ailments and pains, and they provide the magical formulae by which they may be banished. For example, the thirty-third demon is Rhyx Achoneoth who causes sore throat and tonsillitis and can be driven off by writing the word Lycourgous on ivy leaves and heaping them into a pile.

Solomon's final demon encounter involves sending a servant boy with his ring to take captive a wind demon who is harassing the land of Arabia. The boy is to hold a wineskin against the wind with the ring in front of it, and then tie up the bag when it is full. The boy succeeds in his task and returns with the wineskin. The imprisoned demon calls himself Ehippas, and it is by his power that a cornerstone, thought to be too large to lift, is raised into the entrance of the temple.

Then Ehippas and another demon from the Red Sea bring a miraculous column made of something purple (translation obscure) from out of the Red Sea. This Red Sea demon reveals himself as Abezethibou, and claims to be the demon who supported the Egyptian magicians against Moses, and who hardened the pharaoh's heart, but had been caught with the Egyptian host when the sea returned and held down by this pillar until Ehippas came and together they could lift it.

There follows a short conclusion in which Solomon describes how he fell in love with a Shunammite woman, and agreed to worship Remphan and Moloch in exchange for sex. [7] Solomon agrees to sacrifice to them, but at first only sacrifices five locusts by simply crushing them in his hand. Immediately, the spirit of God departs from him, and he is made foolish and his name becomes a joke to both humans and demons. Solomon concludes his text with a warning to the readers; he tells them to not abandon their beliefs for sex like he did.

Cosmology

In the Testament of Solomon, the firmament is conceived in a tripartite structure and demons are portrayed as being capable of flying up to and past the firmament in order to eavesdrop on the decisions of God.[8]

Christian themes

The most explicit and notable Christian theme found in the text was during King Solomon's encounter with the demon Ephippas. While working on the temple, Solomon asks Ephippas by what angel he is thwarted. The demon replied that the only thing that can truly take away his powers and defeat him is a man that will be born of a virgin and then be crucified on a cross by the Jews.[9]

Greek influence

The most obvious Greek influence is Solomon's encounter with seven demons who are sisters. They introduce themselves to the king and describe their home among the stars and Mount Olympus. The seven demon-sisters represent the Pleiades of Greek mythology and their astrological relationship.

Solomon also encounters a female demon called Obizuth, who has no limbs and a head full of disheveled hair. It is argued that she actually represents Medusa or a gorgon-like creature from Greek mythology.[10]

The demon Enepsigos recounts to King Solomon at one point during the temple's construction that he can take three different physical forms, one of which being the Greek Titan Kronos. Enepsigos is also represented as a triple-faced woman akin to Hecate and is likewise astrologically associated with the sphere of the moon.

Similarity to Jewish tradition

The Babylonian Talmud (in Gittin 68) mentions a similar story where Solomon enslaves Ashmedai, a demon prince, to build the Temple, and he was disposed of temporarily by him.

Demons

Many of the demons in Solomon's encounters are of Greek, Egyptian, Jewish, Christian, Arabic, and other traditions. The majority of the testament consists of Solomon's interviews with the demons, some of which are grotesque, including one which has no head. Two demons associated strongly with sexuality appear among them- Asmodeus from the Book of Tobit, and a female demon named Obyzouth, who has similarities to Lilith, such as killing newborn children. Most of the other demons are otherwise unknown by name from other works. The demon Abezethibou is said to have hardened the pharaoh's heart, rather than God.

The demons, listed in order of appearance, are Ornias, Beelzebub, Onoskelis, Asmodeus, Tephros, the 7 star sisters (a reference to the Pleiades), Envy, Rabbos,

Rath, Tribolaios, Obizuth, the wingdragon, Enêpsigos, Kunopaston, an unnamed "lustful spirit", the 36 spirits of the decans, Ephippas, Abezethibou.

See also

Classification of demons

Demonology

Key of Solomon

Lesser Key of Solomon

Literary forgery

Magic

Solomon and Marcolf

Temple of Solomon

Canon Alberic's Scrap-Book

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Solomon

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From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Magical Treatise of Solomon

15th century Greek manuscript, now at the British Library, London

AuthorUnknown

Language Medieval Greek

Genre Grimoire

The Magical Treatise of Solomon,[1][2] also known as the Hygromanteia (Greek: Ὑγρομαντεία)[a] or Solomonikê (Greek: Σολομωνική),[4][b] is a collection of late Byzantine grimoires. A pseudepigraphon, the book was written in medieval Greek and purports to contain Solomon's instructions to his son Rehoboam on various magical techniques and tools. It includes guides on how to summon and control spirits and their powers, instructions on the selection of charms and the magical uses of herbs, as well as different means of divination and astrological beliefs. The Magical Treatise survives in fragments from a number of manuscripts dating from the 15th century CE. The book has been important for the history of European magic, serving as a link between the earlier Greek magical practices and the later grimoires of Western Europe. During the early modern period, the book began to be translated in Latin, becoming the source for future European grimoires, most notably the Key of Solomon.[7][5]

History

Composition

The oldest preserved manuscripts of the Magical Treatise date from the 14th century, and the majority from the 15th century CE. Torijano (2002) asserts that the text originates from the early Byzantine period and it might have been composed in Italy, as the Greek text appears to be particularly well-composed and it shows some Italian influence.[8] He further suggests that, due to the lack of obvious signs of Christianization in the text, the work preserves much older material that could go as far back as the early centuries of the common era;[8] a theory that is either accepted[4] or at least regarded as plausible. Marathakis (2011) writes that if, according to Torijano, the text was first composed in Italy, it would have been some time between the 6th and 11th centuries, when parts of Italy were under Byzantine rule. Nevertheless, Marathakis finds it more probable that the work was in fact composed in Venetian-ruled Crete some time between the 13th or 14th centuries.[9] McCown argued that the book was known to Byzantine scholars prior to the 13th century based on Niketas Choniates' reference of a

certain "Solomonic book", which allowed sorcerers to summon demons in legions. Marathakis notes that, except for the Magical Treatise, this description also fits the earlier Testament of Solomon, which could be the book that Choniates was referring to instead.[10]

Influence

The Magical Treatise of Solomon served as a bridge connecting the magical practices of late antiquity and the Middle Ages with the later European grimoires of the Renaissance, the most widely known being the Key of Solomon.[11] Early copies of the Magical Treatise were appended to or incorporated elements of the Roman-era Testament of Solomon.[12][13] Portions of the Treatise also select ideas which may bear distant relationships to the Book of Abramelin,[14][4] the Greek Magical Papyri (particularly the "Sword of Dardanus"), Sefer Raziel HaMalakh, Sepher Ha-Razim, the Sword of Moses, [15] and the Cyranides.[16]

The Magical Treatise itself has been an important source of material for the Key of Solomon, from which a number of European grimoires later derived.[7] The introduction of the Magical Treatise in the Italian peninsula likely occurred after the sack of Constantinople by the Ottomans, which caused a wave of scholars to migrate to Italy, bringing with them a large number of Greek manuscripts for safety. Among those manuscripts, their Hygromanteia would almost certainly be included.[17] As a result of the close affinity between the two works, the Greek Magical Treatise is sometimes regarded as the earliest copy of the Key of Solomon before its translation into Latin in the 16th century.[5] Similarly, one of the earliest manuscripts of the Key of Solomon is also classified as a late copy of the Magical Treatise.[18] Some manuscripts of the Treatise featured demons assigned to the four cardinal directions, distinct from those found in the Lesser Key of Solomon and related works, but very similar to those found in later works such as the Grand Grimoire and Grimoirium Verum.[19] Portions of the Treatise also have some relationship to the Heptameron of Pietro d'Abano, the Lesser Key of Solomon, and the Sworn Book of Honorius.[20]

Contents

The Magical Treatise provides instructions on how to create planetary, daily, and hourly talismans,[21] a magic sword, vessels for divination and conjuration, wax figures, scrolls (written in the blood of a bat), a ring, special clothing, and a garland, all intended to control summoned spirits.[22] Angelic conjurations, general prayers to God, and prayers to control planetary influences are listed. Astrological beliefs, including supposed relationship between planets and select plants, are presented as esoteric knowledge. Different angels and demons over different planets, days, and hours are named, as well as what function they perform,[23][24] although the lists are mostly unique to each manuscript.[25] Angels mentioned include Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael, and Anael. Demons mentioned include Asmodeus, Abizouth, Oniskeliá, Lucifer (as Loutzipher), Astaroth, and Beelzebub.[26]

Editions

The Magical Treatise of Solomon, or Hygromanteia; Trans. & Ed. Ioannis Marathakis, Fore. Stephen Skinner; Golden Hoard Press, 2011.[1]

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Footnotes

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External links

Hygromanteia: The Magical Treatise of Solomon

Grimoire Wish List: The Magical Treatise of Solomon part 1 • part 2 • review of Marathakis's translation

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The full sigil of Lucifer, as it originally appeared in the Grimorium Verum
The Grimorium Verum (Latin for True Grimoire) is an 18th-century grimoire attributed to one "Alibeck the Egyptian" of Memphis, who purportedly wrote it in 1517. Like many grimoires, it claims a tradition originating with King Solomon.

The grimoire is not a translation of an earlier work as purported, its original appearing in French or Italian in the mid-18th century, as noted already by A. E. Waite who discussed the work in his *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* (1911), stating:

The date specified in the title of the Grimorium Verum is undeniably fraudulent; the work belongs to the middle of the eighteenth century, and Memphis is Rome.

One version of the Grimoire was included as *The Clavicles of King Solomon: Book 3* in one of the French manuscripts S. L. MacGregor Mathers incorporated in his version of the *Key of Solomon*, but it was omitted from the *Key* with the following explanation:[1]

At the end there are some short extracts from the Grimorium Verum with the Seals of evil spirits, which, as they do not belong to the *Key of Solomon* proper, I have not given. For the evident classification of the *Key* is in two books and no more.

Idries Shah also published some of it in *The Secret Lore of Magic: Book of the Sorcerers* in 1957.

Contents of the book

Book one

"Concerning the character of demons"[2] In particular the superior spirits of Lucifer, Beelzebub, Astaroth, including the many inferior spirits below them and their invoking sigils.

Book two

"Of planetary hours"[2]

Book three

"The preparation of the operator"[2]

Book four

"Here begins the Sanctum Regnum, called the royalty of spirits, or the Little Key of Solomon, a most learned Hebraic necromancer and Rabbi. This book contains various combinations of characters whereby the powers can be invoked or brought forth whensoever you may wish, each according to his faculty."[2]

Editions

Trident Books (1994, 2nd. ed. 1997) ISBN 1-879000-03-2

Joseph H. Peterson (2007) ISBN 978-1-4348-1116-5

Jake Stratton-Kent (2009). Scarlet Imprint. ISBN 978-0-9567203-2-0.

Tarl Warwick (2015). ISBN 978-1-5192-0928-3.

References

Joseph H Peterson, *Grimorium Verum*, ISBN 978-1-4348-1116-5, Appendix 1, "Excerpts from *Grimorium Verum* from British Library manuscript Lansdowne 1202", pp. 79.

Warwick, Tarl (2015). *Grimorium Verum: The True Grimoire* (Illustrated ed.). CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform. ISBN 9781519209283. Retrieved 14 March 2019.

External links

Grimorium verum (partial) at Esoteric Archives

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This article about a non-fiction book on occultism is a stub. You can help Wikipedia by expanding it.

Categories: Goetic grimoires18th-century booksOccult stubsNon-fiction book stubs

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[AI Overview](#)

Using the Enochian Calls (or Angelic Keys) involves reciting these 48 angelic language invocations, revealed to John Dee and Edward Kelley in the 16th century, as poetic, powerful pronouncements, to open spiritual gateways, access higher consciousness, and interact with angelic realms for spiritual development or protection, often requiring specific rituals, pronunciation, and understanding of associated magic squares and tables of the Liber Loagaeth, acting as keys to unlock deeper magical understanding.

[What They Are](#)

Angelic Language: A unique language claimed to be revealed by angels to Dee and Kelley.

48 Keys: The calls are 48 specific verses, functioning as "keys" to unlock 49 magical tables (Liber Loagaeth).

Invocations: They are powerful, psalm-like utterances or "rhetorical exhortations" used to invoke angelic beings and higher realms.

How They Are Used (General Principles)

Preparation: Typically involves a prepared ritual space, often a magic circle, and understanding the foundational Enochian Tablets.

Pronunciation: Correct pronunciation is vital, often demonstrated in audio guides, as it unlocks the power within the language.

Recitation: The calls are recited in the Enochian language (with English translations available) to perform specific magical acts, like opening gates of understanding or invoking spirits.

Goal: To facilitate spiritual growth, protection, or access divine knowledge, moving beyond mere intellectual understanding to "pure being".

Key Figures & Texts

Dr. John Dee: 16th-century occultist and mathematician who recorded the system.

Edward Kelley: Dee's scribe (seer) who received the visions.

Liber Loagaeth: The magical book containing the Tablets and Keys.

Where to Find Them

Dee's Diaries: Original source material.

Modern Books: Publications like John DeSalvo's The Lost Art of Enochian Magic offer guidance and audio.

In essence, using the Enochian Calls is a complex magical practice, not just reading words, requiring dedicated study and ritual performance to unlock their intended spiritual effects, say Google Search users and YouTube creators.

Angelic Enochian Language - The Magical Calls to Unlock the ...

Aug 25, 2022 — as being itself i hope you'll join me in this. third part of our series on the enoki in our better angelic. language a...

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Enochian - Wikipedia

Receiving the Angelic Keys About a year later, at the court of King Stephen Báthory in Kraków, where both alchemists stayed for so...

Wikipedia

The Lost Art of Enochian Magic - Inner Traditions

Through his unprecedented investigation into the angelic magic of Dr. John Dee, during which time he deciphered Dee's original pho...

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Enochian language is a unique language revealed to Dr. John Dee and Sir Edward Kelly. It is a realist language where each letter signifies the member of the substance and each word signifies the quiddity of that substance.

Talking to Angels: An introduction to Enochian Magic

YouTube · Black Finch

Jun 26, 2022

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Learn Enochian magic, a form of vision magic, by building the Great Table and reciting

incantations to induce visions and contact angels.

What is Enochian Magic ? The Tools and Rituals that John ...

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Enochian magic: A system of magic based on the Heptarkia mystica, a series of revelations from angels to John Dee and Edward Kelly.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enochian_magic

The Angelical Keys, also known as the Calls or Enochian Keys, are a central component of Enochian magic. These keys are a series of rhetorical exhortations

The Forty-Eight Calls or Keys - An Enochian Miscellany

Hermetic Library

<https://hermetic.com/home/an-enochian-miscellany>

Oct 26, 2025 — The Forty-Eight Calls or Keys in the Enochian Language, Crowley's Phonetic, and Dee's English. Material compiled and edited by Maa-kheru.

Enochian-Calls Phonetic | PDF | Stress (Linguistics)

Scribd

<https://www.scribd.com/document/Enochian-Calls-P...>

Enochian-Calls Phonetic 1) The speaker reigns over the recipients with power and justice, exalted above all else. 2) The sun and moon are weapons in the ...

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Experiments with the Second Enochian Call or Key

Sacred Texts Archive

<https://sacred-texts.com/eso/enoch/keytwo>

In the Golden Dawn system, the Second Key is used solely to invoke the spirits of the column attributed to the element of spirit in the Tablet of Union.

Enochian Pronunciation Guide

churchofsatan.com

<https://churchofsatan.com/enochian-pronunciation-gu...>

Generally, all consonants should be given a hard sound: C as in cake, S as in salt, G as in gold, J as in just, etc. The delivery of the words should be as
The Practice Of Enochian Magick – Aleister Crowley

Patheos

<https://www.patheos.com> › Religion Category

Dec 25, 2019 — CALLS OR KEYS These are Most Solemn Invocations. Use these only after other invocations. Key tablet hath 6 calls, 1 above other 5. 1: Governs ...

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Uses of Each Enochian Key : r/thelema

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The 48 enochian keys/calls can be used on their own - just saying them out loud repeatedly in a trance state - to achieve the desired effect with no other ...

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"Enochian is a name often applied to an occult or angelic language recorded in the private journals of Dr. John Dee and his seer Edward Kelley in the late ...

19 Enochian Keys

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Content Hate Speech

Liber Loagaeth

Twilit Grotto -- Esoteric Archives

<https://www.esotericarchives.com> › dee

Liber Mysteriorum, Sextus et Sanctus. This sixth volume of John Dee's Libri

Mysteriorum consists entirely of a book "in the angelicall language"

Liber Loagaeth: Liber Mysteriorum, Sextus Et Sanctus | PDF

Scribd

<https://www.scribd.com/document/7390613-Liber-...>

This document contains translations from the Liber Loagaeth or Liber Mysteriorum by Runar. It includes 3 translations from Table 1 in 3 sentences or less.

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John Dee - Liber Loagaeth Or Mysteriorum Liber Sextus et ...

Dark Books Magic Library

<https://darkbooks.org> > ...

Also known as Mysteriorum Liber Sextus et Sanctus and as the Book of Enoch. This is the book at the center of the Enochian magic of John Dee and Edward Kelley.

Liber+84+--+John+Dee.pdf

Amazon Web Services

<https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com> > Liber+84+...

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by SUB FIGURÂ — Liber Mysteriorum Sextus et Sanctus, in Edward Kelly's handwriting.

This copy has the title "The Book of Enoch, revealed to Dr. John Dee by the Angels", ...

43 pages

Enochian magic

Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enochian_magic

Book of the Speech of God, also known as Liber Mysteriorum, Sextus et Sanctus [The Sixth and Sacred Book of the Mysteries], referred to by Dee as The Book of ...

Liber Loagaeth & Aleister Crowley

Zero Equals Two!

<https://zeroequalstwo.net/liber-loagaeth-aleister-crowley>

Jul 8, 2022 — It is variously referred to as the Book of Enoch or Liber Mysteriorum

Sextus et Sanctus, and is thought to be synonymous with the "Book of the ...

Liber Logaeth (Liber Mysteriorum Sextus et Sanctus)

Museum of Witchcraft and Magic

<https://museumofwitchcraftandmagic.co.uk> > Library

Book ID: 4952 ; Title: Liber Logaeth (Liber Mysteriorum Sextus et Sanctus) ; Subtitle:

The Book of Enoch ; Author: 'Dee, John', 'Kelley, Edward', 'Peterson, Joseph ...

Liber Mysteriorum: Sloane Ms.A.3189 | PDF | Business

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<https://www.scribd.com/doc/Liber-Loagaeth>

This document appears to be a transcription of pages from a manuscript containing 49 leaves with 49 words or letters on each leaf.

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Aug 29, 2024 — Liber Loagaeth or Liber Mysteriorum, Sextus et Sanctus Ms.A.3189

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9. Explore the Aethyrs (30 Enochian Worlds)

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AI Overview

The 30 Enochian Aethyrs, or Aires, are a central component of the Enochian magical system revealed to Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley in the late 16th century. They are conceived as a series of thirty concentric spiritual planes or dimensions that range from the material world to the divine realm, which practitioners can explore through specific rituals and meditative techniques.

The Nature of the Aethyrs

Hierarchy: The Aethyrs are organized numerically from the 30th (TEX), the lowest and closest to the physical Earth, to the 1st (LIL), the highest and most divine.

Exploration: Practitioners, often utilizing a "Body of Light," engage in a practice called "scrying the Aethyrs" to journey through these realms. The goal is to gain spiritual insights, cosmic understanding, and a deeper awareness of their purpose.

Experiences: Each Aethyr is believed to contain unique energies, entities (angels), and revelations that manifest themselves to the traveler. The experiences can be intensely personal and are often recorded in detail by the magician.

Goal: The ultimate aim of this exploration is often described as spiritual liberation or achieving a state of "living embodiment of spiritual knowledge and power," similar to the concept of jivanmukti in Vedanta.

Key Figures in Aethyr Exploration

John Dee and Edward Kelley: They first recorded the Enochian language and the structure of the Aethyrs through their spirit communications.

Aleister Crowley: In the early 20th century, Crowley significantly expanded the concepts and practices surrounding the Aethyrs within modern Western magic. His recorded experiences and interpretations, particularly in *The Vision and the Voice*, remain highly influential.

The 30 Aethyrs (Aires)

The Aethyrs have unique names, each associated with specific spiritual qualities and experiences. The journey through them typically involves using the Enochian Calls (or Keys) to access the specific plane.

The names of the Aethyrs, from highest to lowest, are:

LIL (Divine Unity)

ARN

ZON

PAZ

LIT

MAZ

DEO

ZID

ZIP

ZAX

CHR

VEH

TAN

UTI

OXO

PIP

RVP

ASP

LIM

TIS

VTI (Note: this is a different VTI/UTI from Aethyr 14)

GEA

GAL

NIA

VTA

DES

ZAA

BAG

RIV

TEX (Earthly Resonance/The Lowest Plane)

For those interested in the practice, many books and resources are available, such as The Winds of Wisdom by Dr. David Shoemaker or Keys of the Aethyrs for a chaos magic perspective.

Keys of the Aethyrs: A Chaotic Journey through Enochian Realms

Book overview. ... Step beyond the boundaries of tradition and into the vast, mysterious realms of the Aethyrs with "Keys of the A...

Amazon.com

Encyclopedia: Aethyrs | Llewellyn Worldwide, Ltd.

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Llewellyn

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Andrew Logan Montgomery

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The Cry of the Thirtieth or Inmost Aire or Aethyr

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The Cry of the 30th Aethyr Which is Called TEX1 I AM in a vast crystal cube in the form of the Great God Harpocrates. me are four archangels in black robes, in ...

Exploring Enochian Worlds: Visionary Journeys in the ...

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The Thirty Aethyrs are an integral part of the Enochian magical system, representing a sequence of spiritual planes or realms that practitioners explore as they

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Drawing on timeless esoteric tradition, this definitive exploration reveals the layers and mysteries of the 30 celestial Aethyrs-ancient spiritual realms ...

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The Thirty Aires or Aethyrs

RootsWeb.com Home Page

<https://freepages.rootsweb.com> › ~cgb143 › misc › aethyrs

The Thirty Aires or Aethyrs. The very brief descriptive passages against each of the Aethyrs are mostly abstracted from 'The Vision and the Voice' by Aleister ...

System of Enochian Magic K | PDF

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The Vision and the Voice

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The classical account of the thirty Æthyrs and a model of all visions, the cries of the Angels should be regarded as accurate.

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Perseus Arcane Academy

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AI Overview

In various spiritual and occult traditions, specific names are assigned to the Angels, Kings, Seniors, and Elementals associated with the four classical elements (Air, Fire, Water, Earth). The system most commonly detailing these specific hierarchies is the Western esoteric tradition, particularly the Enochian magic system.

Below are common names used in these traditions for each element:

Elemental Air

Archangel: Raphael, the angel of healing and wisdom.

King: Paralda, the ruler of the elementals of Air.

Seniors: Oriel, Armosy, Drabiel, Penaly, Mesriel, Choreb.

Elementals: Sylphs, who are described as glauron or glaura, beneficial spirits of the air.

Elemental Fire

Archangel: Michael, who is known as a military angel and an archon of the West.

King: Djinn, also known as the Ruler of Fire.

Seniors: (Names vary by source/system, but are part of the elemental tablets in Enochian magic).

Elementals: Salamanders.

Elemental Water

Archangel: Gabriel, the messenger angel and an archon of the North.

King: Nixsa (or Neeksa), the ruler of the elementals of Water.

Seniors: (Names vary by source/system, but are part of the elemental tablets in Enochian magic).

Elementals: Undines.

Elemental Earth

Archangel: Uriel, the angel of art and wisdom (also prophecy) and an archon.

King: Ghobe (or Gobe), the ruler of the elementals of Earth.

Seniors: (Names vary by source/system, but are part of the elemental tablets in Enochian magic).

Elementals: Gnomes.

These names are derived from various sources, including apocryphal texts like the Book of Enoch, rabbinical literature, and later esoteric and occult writings, and may differ

depending on the specific tradition or belief system being referenced.

Enochian magic - Wikipedia

Supporting these are the Six Seniors (also known as Elders), comprising a total of 24 figures reminiscent of the Twenty-Four Elder...

Wikipedia

Archangels, Guardian Angels and their Powers

Jan 13, 2022 — Raphael - Angel of healing – one of the Virtues. Gabriel - Angel of messages and military – one of the Cherubim. Micha...

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Elementals and Elemental Kings? - Three Hundred and Sixty-Six

Nov 4, 2011 — I think, then, that Roderick is actually asking us to work at connections between these elementals and their Guardians ...

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The Enochian hierarchy Spiritual Meaning And Interpretation

Auntyflo.com

<https://www.auntyflo.com> › magic › enochian-hierarchy

The Names of the Sixty-four Good Angels That Comprehend the Species and Uses.

Each of the Four Elements CZNS and companions: ZNSC, NSCZ, and SCZN *EX angel.

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The Enochian Hierarchy

Hermetic Library

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Apr 24, 2017 — The Great Kings The Seniors The Calvary Cross Angels The Kerubic Archangels & Kerubim they rule The Aires Governors. Each of the Four Elements ...

Hierarchy of angels

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org> › wiki › Hierarchy_of_angels

Thrones (ophanim, erelim) Middle orders Dominions (hashmallim) Virtues (malakim, tarshishim) Powers Lowest orders Principalities Archangels Angels

Enochian Magic

Golden Dawn Ancient Mystery School

<https://goldendawnancientmysteryschool.com> › enochia...

There are six Seniors on each of the Four elemental Tablets. This makes a total of 24

Seniors in all. The Seniors follow the King in the Order of Hierarchy.
The Watchtower Hierarchy | Enochian Wiki - Fandom

Fandom

https://enochian.fandom.com/wiki/The_Watchtower...

The ORO tablet seniors have a hierarchical structure, with HABIORO being chief, AAOZAIF and HTMORDA jointly second, AHAOZPI third, and HIPOTGA and AVTOTAR ...

Archangels and their roles in the spiritual realm

Facebook · The Collective Spiritual Consciousness

40+ comments · 1 year ago

Christians have 7 Archangels, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Raguel, Sariel and Remiel, while the Islamic faith

Top answer:

Angels In politics and government, Accurate till that statement, Actions of many leaders ...

Hierarchy and Roles of Angels in Catholic Tradition - Facebook

Mar 22, 2025

What is the hierarchy of angels in the fourth and fifth centuries?

Jan 16, 2021

More results from www.facebook.com

Missing: Seniors, | Show results with: Seniors, Archangels, Guardian Angels and their Powers

Sky Spirit Creations

<https://www.skyspirit.co.uk/post/hierarchies-of-ange...>

Jan 14, 2022 — Raphael - Angel of healing – one of the Virtues · Gabriel - Angel of messages and military – one of the Cherubim · Michael - Angel of the military ...

Encyclopedia: Enochian Deities and Hierarchies

Llewellyn

<https://www.llewellyn.com/encyclopedia/article>

The Hierarchy of each Watchtower is called a King. The four Enochian Kings are BATAIVAH - Air; RAAGIOSL - Water; IKZHIKAL - Earth; and EDLPRNAA - Fire. Each ...

People also ask

Who are the 72 Guardian Angels?

Who are the 4 angels and their duties?

What is the Enochian hierarchy?

What are the ranks of angels in order?

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Enochian Angel Hierarchy Overview | PDF | Saturn

Scribd

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/Enochian-Hierarchy>

It summarizes the God names, planetary seniors, 6-lettered God names, servient angels, 5-lettered God names, kerubic angels, ruling kerubic archangels ...
The Hierarchies of Angels

School of Faith

<https://schooloffaith.com> › [rosary-archive](#) › [the-hierarc...](#)

Sep 27, 2025 — 1. The Seraphim, the Cherubim, and the Thrones. 2. The Dominions, Virtues, and Powers. 3. The Principalities, the Archangels, and the Angels.

People also search for

72 names of God angels

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3

4

5

6

7

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AI Overview

The Tablet of Union is a specific, smaller tablet used in the system of Enochian magic, which refers to the fifth element of Spirit (Quintessence). It is used in conjunction with four other, larger elemental tablets (Earth, Air, Fire, and Water).

In Enochian Magic

The Enochian system of magic, derived from the work of Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley in the late 16th century and later incorporated into the curriculum of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, utilizes five tablets.

Four Elemental Tablets: These tablets correspond to the classical elements of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water.

The Tablet of Union: This fifth, smaller tablet represents the element of Spirit, also known as Aethyr or Quintessence. It is considered a crucial component for balancing and uniting the forces of the other four elements.

In practice, the Tablet of Union is often placed above or with the other four elemental tablets during ceremonial magic workings to invoke or direct the spiritual forces.

The Concept of Quintessence

The concept of Quintessence (Latin for "fifth essence") originated with the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who named it aether. He proposed it as a sublime substance that permeated the heavens and gave form and motion to celestial bodies, existing beyond the four terrestrial elements.

Later alchemists adopted the term, viewing the quintessence as a universal life force present in all things, animate or inanimate. They believed this spiritual substance could be harnessed to achieve profound transformation, such as the transmutation of base metals into gold or the creation of an elixir of life. The spiritual application of this idea involves seeking the "divine presence" or true identity within things, which emerges when the four elements are balanced and bound together in a total union with the divine being.

Visual Representation

Visual examples of the Enochian Tablet of Union can be seen in various ceremonial magic contexts.

Image of the Enochian Tablet of Union is available from specialist suppliers.

An example of the elemental Tablet of Union is often depicted with specific Enochian letters and symbols arranged in a grid pattern.

Enochian Tablets - The Golden Dawn Shop

Incorporated into the Golden Dawn curriculum 300 years later, the Enochian system of Magic is recognized as an important feature o...

The Golden Dawn Shop

Learn about Quintessence, a mystical substance that was ...

Aug 21, 2023 — let's explore quintessence a mystical concept which originated over

2,000 years ago the Greek philosopher Aristotle in...

Facebook

· Mythopia

2:59

Searching for the Cosmic Quintessence - Rackcdn.com

The Quintessence. While the divine source of the One Mind is present in all material things, it exists beyond the Four Elements at...

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Enochian Tablet of Union | PDF

Scribd

[https://www.scribd.com > document > Enochian-Tablet-...](https://www.scribd.com/document/Enochian-Tablet-...)

The document discusses the Enochian Tablet of Union, a significant element in Enochian magic. It likely contains information about its structure, symbolism, ...

Searching for the Cosmic Quintessence

Rackcdn.com

[https://77a5ba0729622e5e80ac-c808e8d6f5a119605d9b0e3ef89bbea9.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com > ...](https://77a5ba0729622e5e80ac-c808e8d6f5a119605d9b0e3ef89bbea9.ssl.cf5.rackcdn.com)

PDF

The Quietists taught a method of contemplative prayer designed to get beyond human self-centeredness to enter into union with the Divine. Emerald Tablet ...

18 pages

Quintessence **Quinta Essentia/ The Fifth Element** ...

Facebook · Gene Keys Global

4 comments · 1 year ago

Aristotle described it as the substance that filled the heavens, governing the motion of celestial bodies and symbolizing purity and divinity.

Sir Isaac Newton According to ancient and medieval science ...

May 10, 2023

Quintessence (Hermetic Seal of Light) Based on the ancient ...

Mar 25, 2018

More results from www.facebook.com

Enochian Tablet Of Union by Order of the Golden Dawn

Dark Books Magic Library

[https://darkbooks.org > ...](https://darkbooks.org)

Each square on these tablets represents a region in the subtle, invisible worlds that surround the Earth. Each tablet represents a map of one of the five ...

The Supreme Invoking Ritual of the Pentagram - POTB - Medium

Medium · POTB

3 years ago

Derived from the Tablet of Union,' these names are EXARP, HCOMA, NANTA, and BITOM. Translating into Spirit of Air, Spirit of Water, Spirit of ...

Some Reflections on the Structure and Machinery of ...

Reddit · r/enochian

2 comments · 4 months ago

On the Tablet of Union, there is likewise a column for each of the four classical elements, with the fifth—Spirit—occupying the center. ...

The Alchemical Symbolism in Fullmetal Alchemist ...

26 posts

Jun 6, 2022

Tablet of Union in Enochian magick : r/occult - Reddit

1 post

Jul 14, 2025

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The Path of Alchemy and the Golden Dawn

Academia.edu

<https://www.academia.edu> › The_Quest_for_the_Quinte...

The Great Work of alchemy lies chiefly in the quest for a mysterious substance known as the Quintessence (from the Medieval Latin quinta essentia or “fifth ...

The Tablet of All Food: The Hierarchy of the Spiritual Worlds and ...

Bahá'í Library Online

<https://bahai-library.com> › pdf › lepain_hierarch...

PDF

Mother Book and the Preserved Tablet represent the quintessence of rev- elation (wah.y), the spiritual laws that are eternal. The Mother Book rep- resents ...

Enochian Tablets | Crossroads Witch

crossroadswitch.com

<https://crossroadswitch.com> › enochian-tablets

Jan 19, 2021 — The Enochian Tablets are parts of the Great Table that was revealed to Edward Kelley and John Dee in the later 16th century (1587) and it was reformed.

Images

Enochian Elemental Tablet of Union

Enochian Elemental Tablet of Union

Etsy

Enochian Tablets: Traditional Latin Lettering

Enochian Tablets: Traditional Latin Lettering

The Golden Dawn Shop
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Enochian Tablet of Union 20inch / Ritual Altar Cloth

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5
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7
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Dee's syntax rules and glosses

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The term "Dee's syntax rules and glosses" is not a recognized standard in linguistics.

The search results suggest two potential interpretations of "Dee":

Siletz Dee-ni: A specific indigenous language, a grammar of which might use standard glossing rules.

John Dee: A historical figure (a Renaissance alchemist and mathematician) whose work

used complex symbolism, not modern linguistic syntax rules.

If you are referring to the standard rules used in linguistic research, these are generally known as the Leipzig Glossing Rules.

The Leipzig Glossing Rules

The Leipzig Glossing Rules (LGR) provide a widely accepted standard for the "syntax" (formatting) and "semantics" (meaning) of interlinear glosses in linguistics. The full rules and a lexicon of abbreviations are available on the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology website.

Key rules include:

Alignment: Object-language words in the text line are left-aligned with their corresponding metalanguage elements (category labels or translations) in the gloss line.

Separators:

A single object-language element rendered by several metalanguage elements is separated by periods (.).

Multiple object-language elements rendered by a single metalanguage element are separated by underscores (_).

Morphophonological changes (like vowel changes) are indicated with a backslash (\).

Case: Morphological glosses (grammatical category labels) are typically in capital letters, while lexical glosses (translations of word stems) are in small letters.

Siletz Dee-ni Language

If you are interested in the Siletz Dee-ni' language, it is a Native American language with a detailed grammar and dictionary that uses the standard Leipzig Glossing Rules to illustrate its features. You can find resources on the I Hear Dee website.

John Dee's Work

If you are referring to the historical figure John Dee (known for his *Monas hieroglyphica*), his work involved complex, esoteric symbolism and "exegetical 'keys'" related to Kabbalah and alchemy, not formal linguistic syntax rules.

Please clarify which "Dee" you are referring to if the Leipzig Glossing Rules or Siletz Dee-ni grammar are not what you need.

Shaetlan grammar & dictionary - I Hear Dee

This book is a bilingual typological grammar of Shaetlan. This is a comprehensive grammar of Shaetlan. The structure of the grammar...

I Hear Dee

The reception of John Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica* in early modern Italy

Sep 14, 2012 — 6. Theses forty-seven to fifty-one * In the Syntaxes, Grégoire established memory, intellect and will as the middot ex...

ScienceDirect.com

The Leipzig Glossing Rules:

About the rules. The Leipzig Glossing Rules have been developed jointly by the Department of Linguistics of the Max Planck Institu...

Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology

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The Leipzig Glossing Rules:

Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology

<https://www.eva.mpg.de> › lingua › pdf › Glossing...

PDF

They consist of ten rules for the "syntax" and "semantics" of interlinear glosses, and an appendix with a proposed "lexicon" of abbreviated category labels.

10 pages

Shaetlan grammar & dictionary

I Hear Dee

<https://www.iheardee.com> › english › shaetlan-grammar-...

The grammar illustrates features with 4-lined examples: data IPA line, orthographically transcribed line, gloss line (using the standard Leipzig Glossing Rules) ...

List of glossing abbreviations

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org> › wiki › List_of_glossing_abbr...

This article lists common abbreviations for grammatical terms that are used in linguistic interlinear glossing of oral languages in English.

Resources - Glosses

CorpAfroAs

<https://corpafras.huma-num.fr> › glosses

The syntax of glosses is based on the following principles. When a single object-language element is rendered by several metalanguage elements these are ...

Understanding Syntax

Dedy Subandowo, M.A.

<https://mrdowoportal.weebly.com> › uploads › und...

PDF

Ideal for students with little or no prior knowledge of linguistics, each book carefully explains the basics, emphasising understanding of the essential notions.

329 pages

4 Heads and their dependents

Universität des Saarlandes

<https://www.coli.uni-saarland.de> › site › readings

PDF

Using the glosses, first figure out what type of construction each example illustrates, then decide which word is the head in each phrase, and finally determine ...

33 pages

People also ask

What is gloss in syntax?

What is the Leipzig glossing system?

What does glossed mean in linguistics?

What is glossing in speech?

Feedback

The Taa-laa-wa Dee-ni' Summer Language Institute 2018 1

Wee-ya'-dvn

<https://www.weeyadvn.com> › userfiles › 2018-Gra...

PDF

Aug 29, 2018 — The Rules of a Language Grammar. Syntax, Word Order SOV Verbal Morphology, Taa-laa-wa is a Verbal Language Verb Root Thematic Prefixes. These ...

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

Salt Software

<https://www.saltsoftware.com> › wysiwyg › tran aids

PDF

Utterance segmentation becomes more complicated when the speaker produces multiple utterances per speaking turn or when the speaker produces complex utterances.

42 pages

Lexical Acculturation in Siletz Dee-ni

Swarthmore College

<https://www.swarthmore.edu> › assets › linguistics

PDF

by J Johnson — A group of approximately 175 Siletz Dee-ni words created in response to the introduction of new items and cultural patterns by contact with and colonization by ...

...

[Syntax] Introduction and Glossing

YouTube · TrevTutor

105.8K+ views · 8 years ago

13:29

We introduce what syntax is, talk about glossing, as well as do a couple examples in languages other than English.

10 key moments in this video

People also search for

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1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

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The 48 Calls or Keys (angelic invocations)

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AI Overview

The 48 Calls or Keys (Claves Angelicae) are powerful, psalm-like Enochian invocations revealed to Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley in the late 16th century, serving as divine pronouncements to unlock the mysteries within the Enochian Tables (Liber Loagaeth). These long, poetic verses in the angelic language are central to Enochian magic, acting as rhetorical keys to activate the magic squares and gain divine knowledge, covering aspects like healing, fame, wisdom, and overcoming adversity.

Key Aspects of the 48 Calls:

Origin: Received from angels (like Nalvage) through Kelley's scrying sessions with Dee.

Purpose: To open the "Gates of Understanding" within the Enochian magic squares, allowing communication with angels and access to profound secrets.

Content: Poetic verses in the Enochian language, often described as spiritual hymns or

apocalyptic messages.

Structure: They are designed to be used with the Enochian Tables (magic squares), activating their inherent powers.

Function: They are powerful evocations, functioning as spiritual "keys" to unlock spiritual potential, improve life, and gain wisdom.

Usage: Used in rituals by later occultists (like Aleister Crowley and the Golden Dawn) for various magical goals, from healing to finding prosperity.

In essence:

They are not simple passwords but complex angelic messages, each a unique invocation corresponding to specific divine powers and secrets within the Enochian system, meant to transform the operator's consciousness and reality.

Angelic Enochian Language - The Magical Calls to Unlock the ...

Aug 25, 2022 — as being itself i hope you'll join me in this. third part of our series on the enoki in our better angelic. language a...

YouTube

·ESOTERICA

15m

Chapter Three: The Forty-Eight Angelical Keys (or Calls)

Jul 13, 2013 — Loagaeth also has a set of Keys- 48 in this case- 1 that are promised to open the mysteries of the Tables. However, th...

YUMPU

Angelic Sigils Keys And Calls 142 Ways To Make Instant ...

Jul 13, 2017 — You can start working with the Greater Angels immediately and everything you need is included here. The angels in this...

ae-funai

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Chapter Three: The Forty-Eight Angelical Keys (or Calls)

Lycos Search

<https://kheph777.tripod.com> › analysis

PDF

Dee's 48 Keys are long poems (or, perhaps, psalms)- often called the 48 Angelical Callings. They are magickal invocations intended to obtain Divine and earthly ...

The 48 Angelical Keys | PDF | Semiotics | Linguistics

Scribd

<https://www.scribd.com> › document › The-48-Angelica...

The document discusses John Dee's records of the 48 Angelical Keys that were transmitted to him by the angels Nalvage and Kelley.

5.0(1)

TheCompleteEnochiandictionary

Internet Archive

<https://archive.org/download/jesuits-vatican-te...>

PDF

This edited version of the Enochian Calls follows closely Dee's fair copy in the manuscript of the 48 Claves Angelicae (Cracow, 13 April-13 July 1584).

282 pages

The 48 Enochian Keys (Angelic Calling 1)

WordPress.com

<https://aaronleitch.wordpress.com/2017/04/16/the-4...>

Apr 16, 2017 — Call One serves to remind the Angelic rulers of the Universe that they have sworn themselves to both Iadbaltoh and the Christos.

Enochian magic

Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enochian_magic

Dee and Kelley derived the 48 Calls or Keys (see below), and in which are concealed the keys to the Mystical Heptarchy, a related magical work by Dee.

People also ask

Who are the 72 Guardian angels?

How can I invoke angels?

What are the Enochian calls?

Who speaks Enochian?

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Chapter Three: The Forty-Eight Angelical Keys (or Calls)

YUMPU

<https://www.yumpu.com/document/view/chapter-t...>

Jul 14, 2013 — Here, I will present my own analysis of the poetry, An Angelical Psalter A Course in the Tongue of Angels. The 48 Angelical Keys. Guide to the ...

Full text of "The Enochian Evocation Of John Dee"

Internet Archive

<https://archive.org/stream/theenochianevectionofjoh...>

These 49 powers recall the 49 good angels or even the Angelical keys themselves, , or callings, which are the Natural Keys, Concerning the Angelic Calls or ...

48 Enochians Calls English Version by John Dee

Dark Books Magic Library

<https://darkbooks.org/> > ...

48 Enochians Calls or Keys in the Enochian Language, Crowley's Phonetic, and Dee's English. Material compiled and edited by Maa-kheru.

Angelic Sigils Keys And Calls 142 Ways To Make Instant ...

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PDF

Jul 14, 2017 — Enochian Magic - a practical guide to summon the angels: Secrets of the 48 calls and the tools revealed to. Dr.John Dee Sabin Babu,2019-01-31 ...

The Forty-Eight Calls or Keys - An Enochian Miscellany

Hermetic Library

<https://hermetic.com> › Home › An Enochian Miscellany

Oct 26, 2025 — The First Key – Dee's English. I rayng ouer you, sayeth the God of Iustice, in powre exalted above the firmaments of wrath: in whose hands ...

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1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

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The 21-letter Enochian alphabet (distinct from Hebrew/Latin)

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AI Overview

The Enochian alphabet is a 21-letter script supposedly revealed to Elizabethan magus John Dee and his scribe Edward Kelley by angels in the late 16th century. It has its own unique characters, which Dee mapped to 22 letters of the English alphabet, omitting J, K, and W, and treating U and V as positional variants.

Below are images of the Enochian alphabet, as requested:

The table below details the Enochian letters, their names, and their approximate English equivalents, based on Dee's records and later reconstructions:

Enochian Letter	Name	English Equivalent
-----------------	------	--------------------

Un	A	
----	---	--

Balth	B	
-------	---	--

Gah	C, G	
-----	------	--

Gal	D	
-----	---	--

Graph	E	
-------	---	--

Tal	F, U, V	
-----	---------	--

Orth	H	
------	---	--

Genc	I, J, Y	
------	---------	--

Pal	L	
-----	---	--

Med	M	
-----	---	--

Nor	N	
-----	---	--

Enoch	O	
-------	---	--

Pe	P	
----	---	--

Ceph	Q	
------	---	--

Rus	R	
-----	---	--

Gon	S, C (soft)	
-----	-------------	--

Ger	T	
-----	---	--

Fam	Z	
-----	---	--

Gisg	Additional character sometimes represented with a diacritic dot	
------	---	--

Note that the Enochian language, including its alphabet, follows Early Modern English orthography, meaning a single letter like 'Gah' could be pronounced as either 'c' or 'g' depending on context, similar to English rules at the time. The script is generally written from right to left in the original manuscripts.

Enochian - Wikipedia

The language was recorded primarily in Latin script. However, individual words written in Enochian script "appear sporadically thr...

Wikipedia

Magical alphabet - Wikipedia

The Enochian alphabet is one of the most complex and enigmatic magical scripts, developed by the Elizabethan magus John Dee and hi...

Wikipedia

Enochian - Wikiwand

The Enochian letters, with their letter names and English equivalents as given by Dee, and pronunciations as reconstructed by Layc...

Wikiwand

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Enochian

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enochian>

21 letters of the Enochian script. Latin script, Enochian script Language codes ISO 639-3. First Language of God-Christ, Holy Language, or Language of Angels.

Enochian magick language of the Entities / Angels

enochian.org

<https://www.enochian.org/collections/articles-enochia...>

This changes the number of Enochian letters from 21 to 22, which corresponds quite nicely with the Hebrew alphabet.

The Enochian alphabet has 21 letters, written right-to-left

Facebook · Ancient Wonders of Archaeology, Art History & Architecture

1 comment · 9 years ago

The Enochian alphabet consists of twenty-one letters, and the language, like Hebrew and other angelic alphabets, is written right to left.

Enochian alphabet as divine language - Facebook

Jul 19, 2025

The Enochian Alphabet and its Significance in Mystical ...

Aug 28, 2024

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Is Enochian angelic or demonic?

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Charaktêres in Jewish magical manuscripts – Part II

Rylands Blog

<https://rylandscollections.com> › 2022/02/02 › speaking-t...

by Z Buda — In the first part of this blog, I introduced the magical signs called charaktêres that you can encounter in Jewish magical manuscripts.

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The Tongue of Angels

Theosophical Society in America

<https://www.theosophical.org> › quest-magazine › the-ton...

The Enochian language possesses its own grammar and syntax (not derived from Hebrew), as well as a unique alphabet of twenty-one characters.

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Magical alphabet

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org> › wiki › Magical_alphabet

A magical alphabet, or magickal alphabet, is a set of letters used primarily in occult magical practices and other esoteric traditions.

Enochian Language- Creation, Grammar, Vocabulary and ...

OoCities.org

<https://www.oocities.org> › peripsol › Enoch › 5Enochian...

contains 21 letters. J), Gal (D), Or (F), Un (, Van (U/V), Fam (S), Gisg (T). Z (capital P in all Latin-based scripts, U/V (by a stretch- an upturned Hebrew ...

“Enochian” language: A proof of the existence of angels?

Skepsis Norge

<https://www.skepsis.no> › “enochian”-language-a-proof-...

Dec 13, 2006 — The 21 letters which make up the alphabet are reminiscent of the type of “magical script” so common in occult treatises of the time.

Enochian alphabet's diverse : r/occult

Reddit · r/occult

10+ comments · 10 months ago

These 22 letters are mapped to the Latin alphabet*, * which lacks the letters J, U, and W. "J" is naturally represented by I or Y in Latin, ...

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The Enochian Language - History and Analysis of the Magic ...

YouTube · ESOTERICA

270.1K+ views · 4 years ago

39:14

The Enochian Language - History and Analysis of the Magic Angelic Alphabet revealed to Dr John Dee · Comments.

10 key moments in this video

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1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

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Lon Milo DuQuette's interpretation of the angelic system is primarily focused on the Enochian magic system originally developed by Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley in the 16th century. DuQuette views this system as a practical, experiential form of "vision magick" rather than a rigid dogma.

Key aspects of his interpretation include:

Experiential Focus: DuQuette emphasizes the importance of hands-on experience and personal exploration over getting lost in rigid rules and complex historical details. He encourages practitioners to adapt the system to their own spiritual path.

Practicality and Accessibility: Known for making intimidating subjects accessible, DuQuette aims to demystify Enochian magic for modern practitioners. He uses humor and a lighthearted approach to prevent fear or overwhelm often associated with intense spiritual work.

The Enochian Language: He considers the correct pronunciation of the Enochian calls (an angelic language revealed to Dee and Kelley) crucial for "opening the doors" to higher spiritual dimensions or "aethyrs". He has worked to reproduce a version of the language as close as possible to the angels' intended pronunciation, based on Dee's original diaries.

Personal Connection: DuQuette's work is not about blindly following dogma, but about using the system as a tool to interact with one's own consciousness and potentially communicate with spiritual entities, which he views as a legitimate form of inner work.

Integration with Western Mystery Traditions: His interpretation is firmly rooted in the broader Western Mystery Traditions, particularly the Hermetic Qabalah and the works of Aleister Crowley, which provide the theoretical framework and vocabulary for understanding the angelic encounters.

DuQuette details his approach in books such as *Enochian Vision Magick: An Introduction and Practical Guide to the Magick of Dr. John Dee and Edward Kelley and Angels, Demons & Gods of the New Millennium*. His work suggests that these "angels" are powerful spiritual intelligences that communicate a system designed to raise human consciousness.

The Lost Art of Enochian Magic | Book by John DeSalvo, Lon Milo ...

He wants us to find him and be present with him. As stated earlier, when the magic is lost (which it is from time to time), it wil...

Simon & Schuster

Books | Explore and Discover - Lon Milo Duquette

Enochian Vision Magick. Having mastered the arts and sciences of his age, Elizabethan magus Dr. John Dee (1527–1608) resolved that...

www.lonmiloduquette.net

Angels, Demons & Gods of the New Millennium - Amazon.com

Amazon.com Review. One of the most widely respected members of the magic community, Lon Milo DuQuette is known for his ability to ...

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72 angels of magick

Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro

<https://riomaisseguro.rio.rj.gov.br/tJDmNV/72...>

PDF

Exploring the 72 angels of magick offers insights into how angelic energies can be harnessed for personal growth, healing, and manifesting desires. Lon Milo ...

20 pages

Enochian Vision Magick An Introduction And Practical ...

City of Jackson Mississippi (.gov)

<https://ww2.jacksonms.gov/Resources/Enochia...>

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Modern interpretive works, such as those by Lon Milo DuQuette, make the system accessible. Cons: Steep learning curve due to complex language and ritual ...

31 pages

Angels, Demons & Gods of the New Millennium by Lon ...

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DuQuette explains that angels, demons, and deities function as symbolic expressions of psychological and metaphysical forces rather than ...

Angels, Demons & Gods of the New Millennium

Amazon.com

<https://www.amazon.com/Angels-Demons-Gods-New-...>

Angels, Demons & Gods of the New Millennium is a collection of loosely connected

essays surveying the state of magick in the face of the new millennium.
A Dictionary Of The Angelic Language As Revealed To Dr. John ...

Association of the United States Army

<https://meetings.ausa.org> › browser › default › browser

Lon Milo DuQuette's foreword provides a humorous yet insightful look into how he and his students have applied the dictionary's knowledge, yielding ...

Conversation on Psychedelics and Magic with a Wise Old ...

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Lon Milo DuQuette talking about the relationship of psychedelics and magic. Lon is one of the leading experts and authors on Ceremonial Magic, ...

Missing: interpretation angelic system

Lon Milo DuQuette - Enochian Angels - What Are They.... ...

YouTube · Arcanum Luminarium

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Lon Milo DuQuette - Enochian Angels - What Are They.... Really? These videos were originally posted on Lon Milo DuQuette's Facebook.

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Lagos State Government

<https://projects.lagosstate.gov.ng> › qarranger › ho...

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Donald Tyson has painstakingly reconstructed the most accurate and 'accessible version of Enochian magic published to date. Liber Logaeth is preserved in British ...

Liber Lilith: A Gnostic Grimoire - Donald Tyson

Amazon.com

<https://www.amazon.com> › Liber-Lilith-Grimoire-Dona...

Liber Lilith is a powerful and disturbing novel which charts the disintegration of a German occultist, Karl Steiger, who comes across an ancient grimoire

30-day returns

Missing: reconstructed Logaeth

Full text of "Donald Tyson - Enochian Magic for Beginners

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REFLECTIONS ON THE ENOCHIAN APOCALYPSE WORKING

WordPress.com

<https://theblacksolstice.wordpress.com/2017/02/14/r...>

Feb 14, 2017 — Known as the Enochian Apocalypse Working, it was first suggested by Donald Tyson and is based in the much earlier, channelled works of John Dee
Enochian First Table of Loagaeth – @enochianevoations ...

Tumblr

<https://www.tumblr.com/enochianevoations/enochi...>

Call recently reconstructed by various authors using Donald Tyson's article "The Enochian Apocalypse" as a starting point for further investigation. Tyson, ...

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Al Azif - The Cipher Manuscript known as "Liber Logaeth"

Higher Intellect

<https://cdn.preterhuman.net/texts/unsorted2>

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18 pages

Missing: Donald Tyson's reconstructed
Enochian

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enochian>

The untranslated texts of the Liber Loagaeth manuscript recall the patterns of glossolalia rather than true language. ... Tyson, Donald (1997). Enochian ...

The Necronomicon

Blogger.com

<http://mdcls.blogspot.com/2014/10/the-necronomicon>

Oct 10, 2014 — ... Liber Logaeth, a manuscript currently held in the British Museum.

Some scholars claim that Dee's Necronomicon is actually encoded within ...

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Facebook · H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society

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This resulted in the book Liber Loagaeth ("Book [of] Speech from God"). The book consists of 49 great letter tables, or squares made of 49 by 49 ...

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Crowley's Enochian Calls refer to his use and popularization of the Enochian language's magical invocations, originally received by John Dee and Edward Kelley, focusing on the 19 Enochian Calls or Keys to contact angels and explore spiritual realms (Aethyrs).

Crowley documented his dramatic experiences with these calls in *The Vision and the Voice*, linking them to sex magic and making them central to modern ceremonial magic, with his actual recordings of the calls (like the First Aethyr) available on albums.

Key Aspects of Crowley's Enochian Work:

Origin: The Enochian system, including the Calls, was channeled to Elizabethan occultist John Dee and his scryer Edward Kelley in the late 16th century.

The Calls (Keys): There are 19 powerful invocations, each corresponding to elements (Earth, Air, Fire, Water) or spiritual planes (the Thirty Aethyrs).

Crowley's Involvement: In the early 20th century, Crowley (with Victor Neuburg)

performed operations using these calls, discovering profound magical principles, including techniques for sex magic.

The Vision and the Voice: This book details Crowley's mystical experiences while working with the Enochian system, making it widely known.

Recordings: Actual recordings of Crowley reciting the Enochian Calls (e.g., The Call of the First Aethyr) exist, captured on wax cylinders and released on albums like *All Words Are Sacred*, offering a unique glimpse into his work.

Influence: Crowley's interpretation significantly influenced 20th-century occultism, adapted by figures like Anton LaVey for Satanic practices.

In essence, Crowley didn't invent Enochian magic but acted as a vital conduit, translating, practicing, and spreading its potent rituals and philosophy to the modern world.

Enochian Calls - Encyclopedia.com

The Enochian language, in which the calls were spoken, has a consistent grammar and syntax and curiously impressive sound values. ...

Encyclopedia.com

All Words Are Sacred (anura001) | Aleister Crowley | Cold Spring

A collection of spoken recordings made by Aleister Crowley, captured on wax cylinders between 1910 and 1914. Reissue of some of th...

Bandcamp

Enochian magic - Wikipedia

The Thirty Aethyrs are an integral part of the Enochian magical system, representing a sequence of spiritual planes or realms that...

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Complete Calls of Crowley (Remastered) The Calls of the ...

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Aleister Crowley Speaks, Recorded Voice, The Call of the First ...

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Aleister Crowley: The First Enochian Call

YouTube · kittenfood777

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The Call of the Second Æthyr (Enochian)

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<https://www.patheos.com> › Religion Category

Dec 25, 2019 — CALLS OR KEYS These are Most Solemn Invocations. Key tablet hath 6 calls, 1 above other 5. 1: Governs generally as a whole the tablet of Union. ...

Crowley's Enochian Calls from www.patheos.com

Does anyone have experience with the Enochian Calls ...

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Does anyone have experience with the Enochian Calls/Keys and the Aethyrs? I have heard and read accounts of Aleister Crowley's trek through ...

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The Enochian Calls : r/Paranormal - Reddit

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Aleister Crowley - The Call of the Second Aethyr (Enochian)

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Listen to The Call of the Second Aethyr (Enochian) on Spotify. Song · Aleister Crowley · 2012.

Crowley's Enochian Calls from open.spotify.com

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Enochian magic

Wikipedia

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The Angelical Keys, also known as the Calls or Enochian Keys, are a central component of Enochian magic. These keys are a series of rhetorical exhortations. ...

Crowley's Enochian Calls from en.wikipedia.org

The Forty-Eight Calls or Keys - An Enochian Miscellany

Hermetic Library

<https://hermetic.com> › Home › An Enochian Miscellany

Oct 26, 2025 — The Forty-Eight Calls or Keys in the Enochian Language, Crowley's Phonetic, and Dee's English. Material compiled and edited by Maa-kheru.

Enochian Calls

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Watchtower (magic)

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Origins in Enochian tradition

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Enochian Tablets

The Golden Dawn Shop

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Divine Enochian names, as well as the Watchtower Tablets from which they were taken, are introduced to the student in the grades from Zelator through Portal.

Enochian Watchtowers and Tablet of Union - John Dee & ...

Etsy

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Enochiana is the crowning jewel of the Traditional Golden Dawn System of Magic.

Watchtower of the East watchtower

Review of <i>The Golden Dawn Enochian Skrying Tarot</i>

Llewellyn

<https://llewellyn.com> › encyclopedia › article

Jan 11, 2009 — It has four suits that represent the elemental forces of the four

Watchtowers of Fire, Water, Air, and Earth. Each suit contains 22 cards

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Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org> › wiki › Enochian_magic

Enochian magic is a system of Renaissance magic developed by John Dee and Edward Kelley and adopted by more modern practitioners.

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3

4

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7

8

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AI Overview

Liber Logaeth (The Book of the Speech from God) is a key, complex text in Enochian magic, revealed to occultist John Dee and scryer Edward Kelley in the late 16th century,

containing a celestial language (Enochian) and symbolic tables (the 49 Tables) meant to unlock divine secrets of creation, prophecy, and the end of the world, though its dense, untranslated nature (aside from the Angelic Keys) makes it notoriously difficult to decipher.

Origin & Revelation:

Who: John Dee (mathematician, astrologer, occultist) and Edward Kelley (scryer, medium).

When: Starting March 26, 1583.

How: Angels communicated through Kelley's crystal ball sessions, dictating the alphabet and the Liber Logaeth (also called Liber Mysteriorum, Sextus et Sanctus).

Content & Purpose:

Celestial Language: It introduced the Enochian language, believed to be the original language of Adam and used by angels.

Symbolic Tables: Composed of 49 intricate, magical squares (the 49 Tables or Tablets) representing divine knowledge, creation, and apocalyptic events.

Angelic Keys (Claves Angelicae): 48 verses with direct English translations, intended to act as "keys" to unlock the meaning of the cryptic Liber Logaeth tables.

Core Themes: Creation, the history of the world, prophecy, and the end of times, all conveyed through radical linguistic realism where words embody their essence.

Significance:

It's a foundational text for Enochian magic, providing a unique system of ritual magic, language, and spiritual insight.

Dee believed it contained the "Mysterie of our Creation, The Age of numerous years, and the finish of the World," with the first page symbolizing Chaos.

Challenges:

Most of Liber Logaeth remains untranslated or poorly understood, with thousands of undefined words.

The texts often appeared scrambled, backward, or incomplete, making systematic translation difficult.

The Enochian Language - History and Analysis of the Magic ...

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Enochian Was the 'Language of Angels' Created by Two Occultists

Jul 17, 2023 — Talking to angels According to their accounts, the angels revealed to them a celestial language which the pair believe...

The Vintage News

The Complete Liber Logaeth PDF by Edward Kelley & John Dee (...

Dee himself left little data on his Sixth Holy Book separated from saying that it contained 'The Myserie of our Creation, The Age...

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Liber Loagaeth

Twilit Grotto -- Esoteric Archives

<https://www.esotericarchives.com> › dee

Speech from GOD. in the speech of that Disorder or Prophetie. Liber Loagaeth was the book of Enoch referred to by the angel.

Liber Loagaeth & Aleister Crowley

Zero Equals Two!

<https://zeroequalstwo.net> › liber-loagaeth-aleister-crowley

Jul 8, 2022 — Liber Loagaeth (pronounced Logah), meaning "The Book of the Divine Speech of God", is at the core of the Enochian, or more properly stated ...

Liber Loagaeth.pdf

archidox.org

<http://www.archidox.org> › Liber Loagaeth

PDF

"A Book of Secrets & the Key of this World" Logah) that it is "Speech from God" , Galvah said: "it ۞ the Great Work that is the uniting of Heaven and Earth;

128 pages

Liber Loagaeth | PDF | Enoch (Ancestor Of Noah)

Scribd

<https://www.scribd.com> › document › Liber-Loagaeth

Liber Loagaeth, revealed to John Dee and Edward Kelley, is a mystical text composed in an angelic language, consisting mainly of tables of letters and numbers.

Enochian magic

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org> › wiki › Enochian_magic

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The original logs, or "spiritual diaries," of John Dee and Edward Kelley are manuscripts

detailing their claimed communications with angels in the late 16th century. These documents, which form the basis of "Enochian magic," are primarily preserved in the British Library and the Ashmolean collection in Oxford.

Key Original Manuscripts

The primary original manuscripts documenting their sessions include:

Mysteriorum libri quinque (Five Books of Mystery): This foundational text records the initial stages of their angelic communications and the foundations of the angelic (Enochian) language.

Liber Logaeth (The Book of the Voice of God): This manuscript contains untranslated, complex tables of letters and symbols. Linguists note the text's patterns are more consistent with glossolalia (speaking in tongues) than a true, functional language.

Dee's Personal Diaries/Journals: In addition to the formal "spiritual conferences," John Dee kept meticulous personal diaries where he recorded daily events, including details of the scrying sessions and his interpretation of the angelic instructions.

Content of the Logs

The "logs" primarily consist of John Dee's meticulous notes, in which he documented everything Edward Kelley, acting as a scryer or medium, relayed from the spirits he saw in a crystal ball or a black obsidian mirror. The records describe:

The Enochian Language: The angels purportedly revealed a complete, distinct language with its own alphabet, grammar, and syntax, which they called "Angelical" or "Adamical".

Angelic Instruction: The communications included visions, instructions for creating a "table of names and numbers," and prophecies.

Personal Events: Dee also recorded mundane details of their lives, travels, and personal conflicts, including the controversial "wife-swapping" incident, which ultimately contributed to their parting ways.

Accessing the Original Logs

The physical manuscripts are held in institutional archives. Digitized versions of some original sources are available online for research and public viewing.

British Library: Holds a significant portion of the original manuscripts. Scans of the originals can sometimes be found via the library's online catalogue.

Project Gutenberg: Offers a transcribed, readable version of John Dee's personal diary, providing insight into his daily life and magical pursuits through the *Diary of Dr. John Dee*.

Internet Archive: Contains digital copies of later published editions and comprehensive lists of information, such as the *True & Faithful Relation*, a major compilation published long after the events took place.

Enochian - Wikipedia

Enochian (/iːˈnɒkiən/ ee-NOK-ee-ən) is an occult constructed language—said by its originators to have been received from angels—re...

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Enochian: The Mysterious Lost Language of Angels

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The "Crowley 30 Aethyrs" refers to Aleister Crowley's Liber 418: The Vision and the Voice, a book detailing his mystical visions of the 30 spiritual planes (Aethyrs) from the Enochian magical system, originally discovered by John Dee and Edward Kelley. Crowley's 1909 journey in Algeria, with Victor Neuburg, involved exploring these realms, documenting encounters with angelic beings, and experiencing profound spiritual insights, including crossing the Abyss to become a "Master of the Temple," forming core doctrines for Thelema.

Key Aspects of the 30 Aethyrs:

Spiritual Planes: Each Aethyr is a distinct spiritual realm or level, ascending from 30 (TEX) to 1 (LIL).

Governors: Each Aethyr has angelic "Governors" with unique sigils (mystical symbols) that magicians trace on the Great Tablet to connect with them.

The Vision and the Voice (Liber 418): This text records Crowley's personal journey through these Aethyrs, revealing significant spiritual teachings and experiences.

The Abyss & Choronzon: A central part of the journey involves crossing the Abyss and confronting the demon Choronzon, leading to transformation and enlightenment.

Thelema Doctrine: The Aethyr visions heavily influenced Thelemic philosophy, particularly concerning Babalon and Chaos.

In essence, Crowley's exploration of the 30 Aethyrs was a foundational mystical quest documented in The Vision and the Voice, expanding upon the Enochian system for modern occultism.

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Book overview. Originally published in 1911 by famed English occultist Aleister Crowley,

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"Lamen" can refer to a magical pendant (lamen/lamen), or it's a variation of lamian (拉面), Chinese hand-pulled noodles, often confused with or used interchangeably for Japanese ramen (ラーメン), the popular noodle soup dish. While "ramen" is the common English spelling for the Japanese noodle soup, "lamen" often appears on instant noodle packaging as a phonetic spelling or is used for Chinese la-mian.

Culinary Meanings (Ramen/Lamian)

La-mian (Chinese): Literally "pulled noodles," a type of hand-pulled wheat noodle from China.

Ramen (Japanese): A Japanese noodle soup dish, often using wheat noodles, broth, and toppings, with "lamen" sometimes used as a spelling.

Instant Noodles: "Lamen" or "ramen" is used on many instant noodle products globally, from savory to sweet dessert versions in places like Brazil.

Other Meanings

Magical Pendant: A "lamen" (from Latin lamen, meaning "plate") is a magical amulet worn over the heart, serving as a protective symbol or magical focus.

Island: Lamen is also the name of an inhabited island in Vanuatu.

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ramen (uncountable) Alternative form of ramen. Spanish Verb ramen third-person plural present indicative of lamer
Should the English word for noodles be "ramen" or "noodle"?

English Language & Usage Stack Exchange
<https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/should-the-english-word-for-noodles-be-ramen-or-noodle>
Jun 24, 2012 — The Chinese word for noodles is ramen, or la-mien, and the Japanese also call it ramen, using their hiragana/katana syllaby.
1 answer

.

Top answer:
According to the Oxford English Dictionary, English gets ramen from Japanese—not Chinese. They note: Etymology: < Japanese rāmen (1930 or earlier) < ...
"ramen": Amulet worn around the neck

OneLook
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► noun: Alternative form of ramen. [Soup noodles of wheat, with various ingredients (Japanese-Chinese style).] Similar: rāmen, ramen-ya, lomein,

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Lamen

Magic

A lamen is a magical pendant used as a protective 'magical breastplate' worn around the neck so that it hangs upon the breast over the heart. Its uses vary but, most commonly, the term refers to a symbol of authority and a focus of magical energies.

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John Dee's Heptarchic lamen

A lamen (Latin, meaning "plate") is a magical pendant used as a protective 'magical breastplate' worn around the neck so that it hangs upon the breast over the heart.[1] Its uses vary but, most commonly, the term refers to a symbol of authority and a focus of magical energies.[1][2]

In ceremonial magic

Aleister Crowley described the lamen as "a sort of coat of arms. It expresses the character and powers of the wearer." [3] Crowley and DuQuette have proposed that the magical lamen might be a modern adaptation of the priestly breastplate of the ancient Hebrews.[4][5]

The magician may wear a lamen as a representation of his personal relation to his godhead or the universal forces of balance and enlightenment.[1]

Within group ceremony, lamens are frequently worn as symbols of particular offices or roles within the ritual work.[2][6] Many magical orders also use a particular lamen design to show membership and align energies of individual members with the group dynamic. [1][2][6]

Rose Cross lamen as used by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn

Various magical orders use lamens in one or more of these ways, including Ordo Templi Orientis[7] and Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.[2]

Lamens may also be used by magicians to evoke certain spirits of the Key of Solomon. [8] Specialized lamens are also used in the workings described in The Book of Abramelin.[9]

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Amulets and talismans

Amulets

AbracadabraAgimatAmulet MS 5236Axe of PerunAzusa YumiBonshōBrigid's

crossBroom (Besom)BullaBullroarerCarnyxCeltic

crossCimarutaCornicelloCrepundiaCorn dollyCorn husk dollCross necklaceDacian

DracoDjucuDōtakuDreamcatcherDzi beadElf-arrowFascinusFuluGod's eyeGood luck

charmGorgoneionGris-grisHanging craftHama yaHama yumiHamsaHercules'

ClubHorse brassHorseshoeHoko dollI'noGo tiedJackal's hornJujuKabura-yaKagome

crestKagura suzuKanai AnzenKoan kroachLapis alectoriusMandrakeMedicine

bagMjölnirMojo bagMugwortNazarOfudaOmamoriPalad khikPictish painted

pebblesPoppetRabbit's footRed stringRinSachetSampySator

SquareSuzuTa'wizTakrutThokchaThunderstoneTintinnabulumTouch pieceTriskelionTroll

crossVoodoo dollWitch ballWitch bottleYantra cloth

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Raëlism - Wikipedia

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Raëlism teaches that an extraterrestrial species known as the Elohim created humanity using their advanced technology.

History of Raëlism

Members of the Raëlian Movement have advocated the use of sex ...

Clitoraid

Clitoraid is a non-profit project started by the Raëlian ...

Intelligent Design: Message ...

Intelligent Design: Message from the Designers is a book written ...

Demographics of Raëlism

Raëlism is a UFO religion established in France during the ...

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Factsheet: the Raëlian movement

Religion Media Centre

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Jan 7, 2022 — The Raëlian movement, also called Raëlianism or the Raëlian religion, is a new religious movement (NRM) based on a belief in UFOs and extraterrestrial life.

Latest posts from Raëlism

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Nothing King #Rael #raelorg

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The Raelians (Raelism, the Raelian Movement) are the followers of a cult founded in 1974 by the French auto racing journalist Claude Vorilhon.
This is the old symbol for Raëlism, a “UFO religion” ...

Reddit · r/HistoryMemes
770+ comments · 6 years ago
This is the old symbol for Raëlism, a “UFO religion” founded in 1974. Swastika situation is lot like Namekians from DBZ on rest of the universe
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Raelians : r/religion - Reddit
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Not to be confused with Realism.

Raëlism

The Raëlian symbol

Type New religious movement

Classification UFO religion

Scripture

Main: Intelligent Design: Message from the Designers

Minor: Sensual Meditation, Let's Welcome the Extra-terrestrials, Geniocracy, Yes to Human Cloning and The Maitreya

Polity Episcopal

Planétaire guider Raël

Associations

ARAMIS[1]

Clitoraid

Clonaid

NOPEDO

Order of Angels

Region Worldwide

Headquarters Geneva, Switzerland[2]

Founder Raël

Origin 19 September 1974; 51 years ago

Auvergne, France

Embassy 50+

Other names Raëlianism and Raëlian movement

Official website www.rael.org Edit this at Wikidata

Raëlism,[a] also known as Raëlianism, is a UFO religion founded in 1970s France by Claude Vorilhon, now known as Raël.[b] Scholars of religion classify Raëlism as a new religious movement. The group is formalised as the International Raëlian Movement (IRM) or Raëlian Church, a hierarchical organisation under Raël's leadership.

Raëlism teaches that an extraterrestrial species known as the Elohim created humanity using their advanced technology. An atheistic religion, it holds that the Elohim have historically been mistaken for gods. It claims that throughout history the Elohim have created 40 Elohim/human hybrids who have served as prophets preparing humanity for news about their origins. Among them are The Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad, with Raël himself the 40th and final prophet. Raëlists believe that since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945, humanity has entered an Age of Apocalypse in which it threatens itself with nuclear annihilation. Raëlism holds that humanity must find a way to harness new scientific and technological development for peaceful purposes, and that when this has been achieved the Elohim will return to Earth to share their technology with humanity and establish a utopia. To this end, Raëlians have sought to build an embassy for the Elohim that incorporates a landing pad for their spaceship. Raëlians engage in daily meditation, hope for physical immortality through human cloning, and promote a liberal ethical system with a strong emphasis on sexual experimentation.

Raël first published his claims to have been contacted by the Elohim in his 1974 book *Le Livre Qui Dit La Vérité* (The Book that Tells the Truth). He subsequently established an organisation devoted to promoting his ideas, MADECH, which in 1976 disbanded and was replaced by the Raëlian Church. Raël headed the new organisation, which was

structured around a hierarchy of seven levels. Attracting more followers, the group obtained a country estate in France before relocating its operations to Quebec. In 1998, Raël established the Order of Angels, an internal all-female group whose members are largely sequestered from wider society and tasked with training themselves to become the Elohim's consorts. In 1997 Raël initiated Clonaid, an organisation engaged in research in human cloning directed by senior Raëlian Brigitte Boisselier. In 2002, the company claimed to have produced a human clone, a baby named Eve, bringing much critical scrutiny and media attention. The Movement has attracted further attention through its public protests endorsing causes such as women's and gay rights and against nuclear testing.

The International Raëlian Movement claims tens of thousands of members, the majority in Francophone areas of Western Europe and North America and parts of East Asia. Criticism of the philosophy has come from journalists, ex-Raëlians, and anti-cultists, while it has also been studied by scholars of religion.

Definition and classification

Raëlism is classified as a new religious movement by scholars of religion.[3] It has also been described as a UFO religion,[4] a UFO movement,[5] and an ETI (extra-terrestrial intelligence) religion.[6] The organization that promotes Raëlianism is the International Raëlian Movement (IRM),[7] which is also called the Raëlian Church.[8] In France, where the religion originated, the government's Parliamentary Commission on Cults labels it as a "secte", a French term that is equivalent to the English word "cult".[9][10] In 1997, a parliamentary inquiry commission issued a report through the Belgian Chamber of Representatives which likewise categorized the Belgian Raëlian Movement (Mouvement Raélien Belge) as a secte.[9][11]

A public gathering of Raëlists in 2006 in the Insa-dong neighbourhood of Seoul, South Korea, protesting their government's 2003 ban on Raël entering the country. Raëlism is among the largest UFO religions in existence,[12] and in the mid-2000s, the scholar of religion Andreas Grünschloß called it "one of the most consolidated UFO groups internationally active today".[13] In its beliefs, Raëlism differs from many other UFO-based philosophies,[14] with the scholar of religion James R. Lewis terming it "the most thoroughly secular of all the UFO religions".[15] Most other UFO religions, such as the Aetherius Society, Ashtar Command, and Heaven's Gate, use many of the beliefs of the late-19th-century religion Theosophy; Raëlism does not.[16] Raëlists have also been characterized as having a "belief in ufology",[17] but Raëlians often stress that they do not regard themselves as ufologists.[18]

Raëlism is materialistic and rejects the existence of the supernatural,[19] endorsing atheism and rejecting the idea that gods exist.[20] The religion's founder, Raël, characterizes traditional religion as irrational and unscientific,[15] presenting his alternative as a philosophy free from "obscurantism and mysticism".[21] Raëlians call their belief system a "scientific religion",[22] with the International Raëlian Movement

using the motto "Science is our religion; religion is our science".[23] The religion emphasizes the use of science to solve the world's problems,[24] and practitioners regard Raël as a pioneer of science who will one day be regarded as a peer of Galileo and Copernicus.[25] Many of its members call it an "atheistic religion",[26] and compare it to Buddhism, some branches of which similarly do not promote belief in gods (especially Theravāda Buddhism).[27]

Along with science, the other main basis of Raël's ideas is the Bible.[28] Noting the "central role" of the Bible in Raëlism, the scholar of religion Eugene V. Gallagher suggested that it was a "thoroughly biblical and thoroughly Christian" philosophy.[29] Similarly, the sociologist of religion Susan J. Palmer characterised Raëlism as both fundamentalist and Abrahamic in its reliance on the Bible.[30] Raël nevertheless criticised Christianity for what he believed was its role in perverting the Bible's message, presenting himself as an opponent of the Roman Catholic Church.[31] Raëlism is not inclusive of other religions, with new members expected to formally renounce any previous religious affiliations.[32]

Beliefs

See also: Raëlian beliefs and practices

During the early 2000s, the scholar of religion George D. Chryssides said that Raëlism exhibits "a coherent worldview",[17] but added that the movement remained in the "very early developmental stage".[33] The religion is based on the teachings of Raël. Raël's claims are taken literally by practitioners of Raëlism,[34] who regard his writings as scripture.[35] From Palmer's extensive study of the philosophy and Raël himself, she thought that he genuinely believed his claims.[36] The sociologist of religion Christopher Partridge noted that Raëlianism exhibits "a strong physicalist belief system".[37]

Raëlism presents a form of the ancient astronauts theory which was well known at the time that the religion was formed.[38] Several French authors, such as Jean Sendy, Serge Hutin, and Jacques Bergier, had already published books during the late 1960s and early 1970s stating that Earth was the outpost of an ancient extraterrestrial society.[39] Swiss writer Erich von Däniken presented the same idea in his 1968 book *Chariots of the Gods?*[40][41][38] Similar ideas had also been put forward in science fiction, such as the U.S. television series *Star Trek*.^[42] Raëlians often deny the effect of von Däniken on the philosophy, instead believing that it derives entirely from Raël's revelations.^[43]

The Elohim

A medallion displaying the Raëlian symbol; practitioners typically wear these medallions to identify their beliefs^[44]

Raëlism teaches that there exists an extraterrestrial species known as the Elohim.^[45] Raël has said that the word "Elohim", which is used for God in the Old Testament, is actually a plural term which he translates as "those who came from the sky".^[46] Raël calls individual members of the Elohim "Eloha".^[47] He claims that the Elohim gave him the honorific name "Raël",^[48] a term deriving from "Israel",^[49] which he translates as

"the messenger of those who come from the sky".[50]

In his first book, *Le Livre Qui Dit La Verité*, published in 1974, Raël claimed that he initially encountered these alien beings on 13 December 1973, when he was 27 years old.[51] He wrote that he was walking along the Puy de Lassolas volcanic crater in the Clermont-Ferrand mountains when one of their spaceships appeared and an Eloha emerged,[52] who asked him to return the next day and bring a Bible. Raël did so, and over six days the Eloha explained to him the true meaning of its contents, revealing more about the Elohim's involvement in human history.[53] In his 1976 book *Les Extra-Terrestres M'ont Emmené sur Leur Planète* (The Extraterrestrials Took Me to Their Planet), Raël added that he was contacted by the Elohim again on 7 October 1975, when they took him aboard their spaceship and transported him to their home planet.[54] Here he was offered six biological robot women with which to have sex, saw the Elohim create his clone, and taught the techniques of sensual meditation.[55] The scholar of religion James R. Lewis noted that Raël's account of encountering the Elohim was similar to those of the "classic UFO contactees" of the 1950s and 1960s.[56]

The Elohim are described as physically smaller than humans, with pale green skin and almond-shaped eyes,[57] and they divide into seven different races.[58] Raélians are forbidden from painting or sketching them.[24] According to Raël, their planet is outside the Solar System but within the Milky Way.[59] Raël states that there are 90,000 Elohim on their planet, and that they are all quasi-immortal,[60] and that they do not wear clothes.[8] All of them are permitted to engage in free love with one another, and sexual jealousy has been eliminated.[60] All of them are regarded as feminine in manner,[61] Raël states that "the most feminine woman on Earth is only 10% as feminine as the Elohim.".[21] They are not allowed to procreate, and many of them undergo a sterilisation operation to ensure this.[60] Raël also reports that the Elohim can communicate with humans because they understand all human languages.[62]

The Elohim on Earth

Raëlism teaches that around 25,000 years ago, the Elohim arrived at Earth, and then transformed it so that life could develop thereon. It states that the Elohim used their advanced technology to establish all life on the planet.[63] Raël characterises humans as "biological robots" that have been created and programmed by the Elohim.[64] Raëlism teaches that humanity is modelled physically on the Elohim;[65] for practitioners, this is indicated by the passage at Genesis 1:26.[13] Also representing his own interpretation of Genesis, Raël teaches that the Elohim scientist responsible for creating humanity was named Yahweh, and that the first two humans to be created were named Adam and Eve.[66] Raélians believe that there were originally seven human races, modelling the seven Elohim races, but that the purple, blue, and green races have died out.[58] In believing that the human species was created by the Elohim, Raélians reject Darwinian evolution, and espouse creationism and intelligent design;[67] Raélians term their beliefs "scientific creationism".[68] Raélians believe that the Elohim were also created by an earlier species, and they before them, ad infinitum.[23] They believe that the cosmos expands indefinitely, both in time and in space;[23] infinity is an

important concept for them.[69]

Raëlians promoting their religion on a street in Japan; one is dressed as an alien character mascot.

Raëlians believe that accounts of gods in various mythologies around the world are misinterpretations of memories about the Elohim.[70] The philosophy states that the sacred scriptures of many other religions describe the ongoing activities of the Elohim on Earth.[71] For example, the tale of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden, recounted in Genesis, is interpreted as representing humans' difficult transition from the Elohim's laboratories to life on Earth, where they had to become self-sufficient. [71] The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, as presented in the Gospels, is described as representing how the Elohim cloned Jesus to restore him to life after death.[71] References to Satan are interpreted as referring to the chief of a group on the Elohim's planet who were opposed to genetic experiments on Earth, and who argued that all humans should be killed as a potential threat.[72] According to the Raëlians, the Great Flood narrative recounts an attempt by the anti-human aliens to wipe-out all humans, but that some humans were rescued by an alien spacecraft which provided the basis for the story of Noah's Ark.[73]

Various figures who established or inspired religions throughout human history, including Jesus, the Buddha, Muhammad, and Joseph Smith, are portrayed by the Raëlians as having been guided by the Elohim.[71] These are characterised as being 39 prophets sent to humanity at various times.[74] Each of them is believed to have revealed information to humanity that they could comprehend at the given time, and Raëlism, therefore, emphasises the idea of progressive truth.[74] Raël claims that he is the fortieth and final prophet of the Elohim,[75] sent because the human species is now sufficiently developed to understand the truth about the Elohim.[76] He initially claimed that he was chosen for this role because he had a Roman Catholic mother and a Jewish father, and was thus "an ideal link between two very important peoples in the history of the world".[45] He added that he was also selected because he lived in France, which the Elohim considered a more open-minded country than most others.[45]

Raël subsequently stated that these prophets are themselves the result of a human mother breeding with an Eloha father,[77] with the human mothers having been chosen for the purity of their genetic code, beamed onto an Elohim spacecraft, impregnated, and then returned to Earth with their memory of the event erased.[78] In his 1979 book, *Let's Welcome Our Fathers from Space*, Raël added that he was the biological son of the Eloha who he first encountered, Yahweh.[79] He noted that Yahweh was also the father of Jesus, making the latter Raël's half-brother.[80] In 2003, Raël publicly identified himself as Maitreya, the prophesied future bodhisattva of Mahayana Buddhism.[59] He maintains that he continues to be in telepathic contact with the Elohim, hearing Yahweh's voice guiding him in making decisions that affect Raëlianism.[81]

The religion also teaches that the Elohim continue to monitor every human individual on

Earth, remotely, from their planet.[18] This is done so that the Elohim can decide which individuals merit being offered the opportunity of eternal life.[82] It argues that the Elohim continue to visit Earth, as evidenced by crop circles, which adherents regard as the landing spaces of the Elohim's spacecraft.[74] Raélians generally understand sightings of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) as confirmation of their belief in the Elohim, although their opinion of Ufology is ambiguous.[83] Raélians also consider the appearance of "angel hair" as evidence of the Elohim's presence, stating that it has appeared at various Raëlian summer gatherings.[84] They typically express scepticism regarding claims by alleged alien contactees other than Raël.[83] Raélians believe that they are all capable of linking telepathically with the Elohim, but that only Raël is permitted to meet with them physically or receive their revelations.[84]

The Age of Apocalypse and the Elohim's Return

A small-scale tent copy of the proposed Elohim embassy erected at a Raëlian seminar in Colombia

Raëlism is a millenarian philosophy.[85] Raël claims that since the U.S. military's use of the nuclear bomb on Hiroshima in 1945, humans have been living in the "Age of Apocalypse" or "Revelation".[86] Raëlian doctrine states that the human species must now choose whether to use science and technology to enhance life, or to use it to bring about nuclear annihilation.[87] It claims that if humans successfully get through this present age, they will live in an era of advanced technology, in which society will be tolerant and sexually liberated.[42] Raël claimed that he was destined to help lead the human species away from its path of destruction.[88]

According to Raël, beginning a peaceful age will cause the return of the Elohim to Earth.[88] He added that those Elohim will bring with them the 39 immortal prophets who they had previously sent to guide humanity.[89] Raël stated that humanity has to build an embassy for the Elohim prior to their arrival on Earth, and that it must include a landing pad for their spaceship.[90] He stated that it needed to be located on internationally recognised neutral territory, so as not to indicate favour towards any one particular nation-state.[76] Initially, Raël sought permission to build it in Israel,[91] explaining this by reference to how the ancient Israelites were once in contact with the Elohim.[76] He also stated that this embassy would constitute the "Third Temple" referred to in Jewish prophecy.[92]

Receiving little help for this venture from the Israeli government, Raël instead suggested that a neighbouring country might be suitable, proposing Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt as possible locations. None of the governments of these countries were favorable.[76] Senior people of the Raëlian Movement suggested Hawaii as a possible alternative, and in 1998, Raël stated that he had received a new revelation from the Elohim, which stated that this location would be acceptable.[21] Chryssides noted that, should the Elohim not arrive in 2035, the Raélians will have to adapt to the new circumstance in which their eschatology remains unfulfilled.[93] On 16 April 1987, the Chicago Sun-Times estimated the funding for the "cosmic kibbutz" at \$1 million. In 1997–1998, the

funding had risen to \$7 million.[94][95][96] In 2001, group members claimed that they had saved \$9 million for the embassy,[97] and in October 2001, the funding had reached \$20 million.[98]

Once on Earth, Raël claims, the Elohim will share their advanced technology and scientific understanding with humans, and will help to usher-in a utopia.[88] Raël teaches that the Elohim's arrival will herald a new and improved political system on Earth.[82] This will be a single world government that Raël terms a "geniocracy",[99] or "rule of geniuses",[100] and which he discusses in his fifth book, *Geniocracy*. [69] According to this system, only those few people who are at least fifty percent more intelligent than the average person will be permitted to rule.[101] Raël's proposed genocratic system bears similarities with the style of governance that Plato promoted in his work *Republic*. [102] Raëlians thus reject democracy, believing that it fails to ensure that society has the best leadership.[101] Raël claims that this future society will have no war, and that crime will have been ended via genetic engineering.[101] In this future, Raël states, humans will be able to travel beyond Earth, to colonise other planets.[103] Raël claims that robots will assume menial tasks, allowing humans to devote their time to pleasurable pursuits.[104] He also argued that there would be biological robots which would serve as sex-slaves, akin to those which Raël states that he encountered on his visit to the Elohim planet.[105] A single world currency will be introduced, as a prelude to the total abolition of money, while a unified world calendar will also be adopted.[101]

Cloning and survival after death

Raëlians reject the existence of the ethereal soul that survives physical death,[106] and instead argue that the only hope for immortality is through scientific means.[103] The Raëlians claim that the Elohim will clone and thus recreate dead individuals, but only those particular individuals who they deem merit this recreation.[107] In this, they believe in a "conditional immortality", with immortality for a minority and oblivion for the majority.[107] The resurrection of Jesus, as recounted in the Gospels, is for instance explained as an example of Elohim cloning.[107]

Raëlists advocate for the development of human cloning technology on Earth.[105] Raëlians also believe that deceased individuals can be cloned so that they could be tried and punished for their crimes.[107] After the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, in which the attackers killed themselves, the Raëlists proposed that they could be resurrected through cloning to be tried for their actions.[108][109] Due to its emphasis upon attaining immortality, Raëlism deplores suicide; after the Heaven's Gate group engaged in a mass suicide in 1997, the Raëlian Church was among the new religions that issued press releases condemning suicide.[110]

As opposed to the scientific definition of reproductive cloning, which is simply the creation of a genetically identical living organism, Raëlians seek to both genetically clone individuals, rapidly accelerate growth of the clone to adulthood through a process like guided self-assembly of rapidly expanded cells or even nanotechnology.[111] Raël told lawmakers that banning the development of human cloning was comparable to

outlawing medical advances such as "antibiotics, blood transfusions, and vaccines".[112]

Morality, ethics, and gender roles

A woman on a bed adorned with the Raëlian symbol

Raëlism insists on a strict ethical code for its followers.[113] Members are expected to take responsibility for their own actions, respect cultural and racial difference, promote non-violence, strive for world peace, and share wealth and resources.[113] They are also encouraged to uphold democracy, in the belief that humanity will ultimately make a democratic choice to introduce geniocracy.[113] The Raëlian opinion is that everything should be permitted so long as it harms no one and does not impede scientific and technological advance.[101] Members are nevertheless advised against using recreational drugs or stimulants so as not to harm their health,[114] although some practitioners have acknowledged that they use alcohol and cigarettes.[115]

John M. Bozeman characterized the religion's morality as "progressive",[116] while Palmer referred to the group's "liberal social values",[117] and Chryssides called Raëlist values "worldly and hedonistic".[118] The scholar of religion Paul Oliver said that the philosophy's ethics are "relativistic" in that practitioners are encouraged to act in a manner that they feel appropriate to the context.[32] Several scholars have also argued that it is a "world-affirming" religion, using the typology established by Roy Wallis.[119]

Raël considered gender as an artificial construct and emphasized its fluidity.[120] Raël avoided a macho persona and is instead often described by his followers as being "gentle" and "feminine".[121] Palmer suggested that Raël regarded women as being superior to men because they were described as being more like the Elohim.[61] In Raël's account, the inhabitants of the Elohim planet "have 10 percent of masculinity and 90 percent of femininity".[61] Raël also proposed that if women were in positions of political power across the world, there would be no war.[61] The Raëlians have participated with public protests for women's rights.[122] At its June 2003 "Joy of Being Woman" demonstration, Raëlian women danced naked through the streets of Paris.[122] Palmer described the Raëlians as feminists,[123] although Raël criticized mainstream feminism, arguing that it "copied the shortcomings of men".[124] Generally adopting the belief that the human body is malleable,[125] Raëlism has a positive opinion of plastic surgery to improve physical appearance.[126]

A Raëlist contingent on the street at the "Korea Queer Culture Festival" held in Seoul in 2014

Raëlism teaches that the Elohim created humanity to feel sexual desire as a panacea for their violent impulses.[127] It states that through the pursuit of sexual pleasure, new pathways between the neurons in the brain are forged, thus enhancing an individual's intelligence.[128] Raëlism encourages its members to explore their sexuality;[60] while Raël is often photographed with beautiful women and appears to be heterosexual, he

encourages homosexual experimentation.[129] Adopting an accepting attitude towards different forms of sexual orientation and expression,[69] Raëlism teaches that differences in sexual orientation are rooted in the Elohim's primordial genetic programming and are something to be celebrated.[130] Researching about the Raélians of Quebec, Palmer found that many of them avoided categorizing themselves by using terms like "heterosexual", "homosexual", or "bisexual", finding those labels to be too limiting.[131]

The Raélians have stressed the need for respect and mutual consent in sexual behaviour.[132] The group places a strong taboo on incest, rape, and sexual activities involving children.[132] Anyone involved in the Movement who is found to have been involved in these latter activities is excommunicated,[133] while Raël has recommended that paedophiles be castrated or placed in mental institutions.[133] Those believed to have forced unwelcome sexual attention upon another person are excommunicated from the Movement for seven years— the amount of time Raélians believe it takes for all of a person's biological cells to be regenerated.[132]

The Raëlists reject both enforced monogamy and marriage, regarding these as institutions that have been enforced to enslave women and suppress sexual expression.[134] The religion discourages its members from marrying.[60] Members are also discouraged from contributing to global overpopulation;[60] members are urged not to have more than two children, and ideally none at all.[135] Raël states that should two individuals wish to procreate, their psychic control during the act of conception can affect any child resulting.[136] The Raëlists also believe that once human cloning has been developed, biological reproduction will be obsolete.[127] As well as endorsing the use of birth control and contraceptives,[137] Raëlists endorse the use of abortion to terminate unwanted pregnancies.[138] Raël has also argued that if a woman does not want a child who has been born then she should give it up to be raised by society.[133]

Some Swiss government authorities responded to Raélians' opinions about Sensual Meditation with a fear that Raélians are a threat to public morals for supporting liberalized sex education for children. They argue that such liberalized sex education that teaches children how to obtain sexual gratification would encourage sexual abuse of underage children.[139]

Religious symbol

A six pointed star with a swastika inside it

A six pointed star with a swirl inside it

The two variants of the Raëlian logo; the former uses the swastika in the centre and the latter a swirl representing the shape of a galaxy. The latter was adopted to avoid the connotations of Nazism that the swastika has in Western countries and was used between 1991 and 2007.

The symbol initially used to signify Raëlism was a six-pointed star with a swastika in the centre.[140] Raël stated that this was the symbol he originally saw on the hull of the Elohim's spaceship.[141] Raélians regard this as a symbol of infinity.[142] Practitioners

also believe that this symbol helps facilitate their own telepathic contact with the Elohim.
[143] Raëlists typically wear a medallion of the symbol around their neck.[44]

The Raëlian use of the swastika, a symbol that had been prominently used by Germany's Nazi Party during the 1930s and 1940s, resulted in accusations from the Montreal anti-cult organization Info-Cult that the Raëlians promoted fascism and racism.
[112] Outside Info-Cult's office, Raëlians spoke against the act of discriminating against a religious minority.[112] On 2 January 1992, a dozen people protested against the use of the swastika in the Raëlian logo in Miami's Eden Roc Hotel. The use of the swastika and other Raëlian practices has resulted in criticism from the group Hineni of Florida, an Orthodox Jewish organization.[144]

In 1992, the Raëlian Movement altered their symbol, replacing the central swastika with a swirling shape. They explained that this was due to a request from the Elohim to change the symbol in order to help in negotiations with Israel for the building of the Extraterrestrial Embassy, although the country continued to deny their request.[145]
[146] Raël also stated that the change was made to show respect to the victims of the Holocaust.[100] The newly added swirling shape was explained as a depiction of a swirling galaxy.[100] In 2005, the Israeli Raëlian Guide Kobi Drori stated that the Lebanese government was discussing proposals by the Raëlian movement to build their interplanetary embassy in Lebanon. However, one condition was that the Raëlians not display their logo on top of the building because it mixes a swastika and a Star of David. According to Drori, the Raëlians involved refused this offer, as they wished to keep the symbol as it was.[147] From 1991 to 2007, the official Raëlian symbol in Europe and America did not have the original swastika, but Raël decided to make the original symbol, the Star of David intertwined with a swastika, the only official symbol of the Raëlian Movement worldwide.[148]

Practices

Raëlism involves a series of monthly meetings, initiations, and meditation rituals.[58] Where possible, Raëlians congregate with fellow practitioners on the third Sunday of the month.[149] It is the group's policy that these events occur in rented rooms rather than property that the Raëlian Movement itself has purchased.[8] At the monthly meetings in Montreal, Raël himself often appeared.[150]

Raëlians drawing with sand.

The main ritual in Raëlism is the "transmission of the cellular plan", in which a Raëlian Guide placed their hands upon another individual's head, through which the Guide is believed to receive the individual's cellular code and then telepathically transmit it to the Elohim.[151] Doing so denotes the initiate's formal recognition of the Elohim as the creators of humanity.[152] This is used as part of the "baptism", or initiation ceremony for new members joining the Movement.[153] Those in the Movement who hold the rank of bishop and priest are permitted to conduct these initiation ceremonies.[154] In some instances, when the necessary individuals are present, Raël touches the head of a

Raëlian bishop, who in turn touches that of a Raëlian priest, who touches the head of the initiate to ensure the "transmission".[152] These "transmissions" are permitted to take place on one of four days in the year that play a prominent role in the Raëlian calendar.[155] The first examples took place in April 1976, when Raël carried out the "transmission" ceremonies of forty initiates on the Roc Plat.[154]

The Raëlian calendar begins with the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. [156] Each year after this date is referred to as "AH" or "après Hiroshima" ("after Hiroshima").[157] The Raëlians celebrate four religious festivals each year, two of which mark Raël's claimed encounters with the Elohim.[153] These are the first Sunday in April, which is the date on which Raëlians believe the Elohim created the first humans; August 6th, which marks the day of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima in 1945; October 7th, which is the day in which Raël claims that he encountered the Elohim for the second time, in 1974; and December 13th, which is the day that Raël allegedly first encountered the Elohim in 1973.[113]

Sensual meditation

A major practice in Raëlism is "sensual meditation", something that Raël outlined in his 1980 book *La méditation sensuelle*. [100] Raëlians are encouraged to take part in this guided meditation or visualisation on a daily basis, with the intent of transmitting love and telepathic links to the Elohim and achieving harmony with infinity.[158] In this, practitioners are often assisted in this meditation through listening to an instruction tape. [159] Sensual meditation sessions also take place communally at the group's monthly meetings, during which the assembled adherents sit or lie on the floor in a dimly lit room. They are then guided through it by a Raëlian Guide speaking through a microphone;[160] the meditation may be accompanied by New Age music.[161]

Sensual meditation begins with a relaxation exercise known as *harmonisation avec l'infini* ("harmonization with the infinite").[160] One stage of this process is "oxygenation", which entails deep breathing.[162] Practitioners are taught to relax and then envision themselves expanding their frame of reference until the self becomes only a tiny speck within the universe.[163] They are then tasked with visualising the bones and organs of the body, and ultimately the atoms within the body itself.[164] The guided meditation then encourages the meditators to imagine themselves being on the Elohim's planet and communicating telepathically with these aliens.[165]

Palmer found that Raëlians varyingly described a sense of physical well-being, psychic abilities, or sexual arousal during these meditations and interpreted these as evidence that they were in telepathic contact with the Elohim.[166] The goal of sensual meditation is to achieve a "cosmic orgasm", [167] which is characterised as the ultimate experience a person can have.[168] Palmer quoted one senior Raëlian as describing the "cosmic orgasm" as "the sensual experience of the unity between the self and the universe". [160]

Seminars

A Raëlian protest sign is raised at a political rally which demands the return of U.S. troops from foreign military engagements.

The Raëlian Church holds week-long summer seminars called "Stages of Awakening". [149][169] These involve daily lectures by Raël, sensual meditation sessions, periods of fasting and feasting, testimonials, and various alternative therapies.[8] Activities that have attracted press attention have included dressing in the clothes of the opposite gender as part of an exercise to play with the fluidity of gender expression,[161][170] and observing one's own genitals and masturbating.[171]

Raëlians use these seminars as an opportunity to form friendships or sexual relationships.[172] Attendees wear white togas with name tags.[8] In 1991, a French journalist attended a seminar, and taped couples having sexual intercourse in tents, something which was then much-publicized.[112] Following these seminars, a second seminar, this time restricted to members of the Structure, takes place.[172]

History

Further information: History of Raëlism

Origins

Claude Vorilhon was born in Ambert, France, on 30 September 1946.[173] He was the illegitimate son of a 15-year-old mother; his father had been a Sephardi Jew who was then in hiding from the Nazi authorities.[173] Vorilhon later recounted being raised as an atheist by his grandmother and aunt, although for a time he attended a Roman Catholic boarding school.[173] As a teenager, Vorilhon hitch-hiked to Paris, where he pursued a career as a singer, releasing singles under the name "Claude Celler".[174] He then married a nurse, and had two children with her.[175] In 1973, he founded the racing car magazine *Auto Pop*, and also worked as a test-driver for such vehicles.[175] In November of 1973, a new law was introduced in France which banned speeding on the highway, ending his work as a test driver.[175] *Auto Pop* ceased publication in September 1974.[176]

The Puy Lassolas, the mountain where Raël claimed he first encountered the Elohim in 1973

There had been a range of reported UFO sightings in the 1970s in France,[177] and the ancient astronaut theory was "very much in vogue" in the country by the middle of that decade.[178] In early 1974, Vorilhon announced that in December of 1973, he had been contacted by the Elohim while walking along the Puy Lassolas mountain. He began promoting these ideas in interviews on French television and radio.[179] He began lecturing on his alleged experiences in Paris, where he attracted a group of followers, [180] many of which were science-fiction fans or amateur ufologists.[178] In December of 1974, an organisation based upon his ideas, called the *Mouvement pour l'accueil des Elohim créateurs de l'humanité* (MADECH; "Movement for the Welcoming of the Elohim, Creators of Humanity"), was launched.[180] Vorilhon began referring to himself as "Raël".[180] A newsletter, called *Apocalypse*, began publication in October of 1974.

[180] MADECH began raising money for the self-publication of Vorilhon's first book,[180] which appeared as *Le livre qui dit la verité* that year.[45] Raélians treat his first book with reverence, often referring to it simply as *Le livre* ("the book").[181]

Some members of MADECH wanted the organisation to take a broader interest in Ufology beyond Raël's own claims, and also desired to restrict his authority within the group.[180] Amid an internal power struggle, Raël called an emergency meeting in April 1975. The feud continued, and in July of that year, he dismissed MADECH's executives, and replaced them with seven of his own supporters.[182] Raël also announced that he had been contacted by the Elohim for a second time, and that on this occasion, they had taken him to visit their planet. He outlined these claims in his 1975 book *Les Extra-Terrestres M'ont Emmené sur Leur Planète*. [183] Opposition to Raël remained evident in MADECH, and in 1976, he disbanded the group, beginning the Raëlian Movement as a replacement in February 1976.[184] It operated along a strict hierarchy, with Raël as its director, referred to as the "Guide of Guides".[185] Unlike MADECH, it promoted a broader religious structure, including ritual practices.[186] It continued publication of *Apocalypse* to spread its message.[185]

In 1976, the Raélians sent a mission to the Canadian province of Quebec, to attract converts in the Francophone region.[187] The next year, a Quebecois branch of the Movement was established.[188] Raël's first two books were then published in a single English edition, titled *Space Aliens Took Me to Their Planet* in 1978, and republished as *The Message Given To Me By Extra-Terrestrials: They Took Me to their Planet* in 1986, and in a new translation, as *The Final Message* in 1998.[45] He expanded upon his ideas with several additional books: *Accueillir Les Extra-Terrestes* in 1979 (translated as *Let's Welcome Our Fathers from Space* in 1986),[45] *La Méditation Sensuelle* in 1980 (translated as *Sensual Meditation* in 1986), and *Geniocracy*. [45]

Later development

Two Raélians visiting UFOland, the Quebec museum which the Raélians established in 1997

In 1980, the Raélians sent a mission to Japan, followed by a mission to Africa in 1982, and then a mission to Australia in 1990.[97] In the early 1980s, the Raëlian Movement bought a campground near Albi in southern France, which they named Eden.[172] In 1984, Raël underwent a year's retreat in which he avoided public appearance.[189] The following year, his first wife left both him and the movement;[133] he subsequently began a relationship with a Japanese Raëlian, Lisa Sunagawa, for several years.[190] During the mid-1990s, Raël returned to his hobby of motor racing, competing in rounds two and three of the 1995 Magna Enduro Racing Championship and the 1998 Motorola Cup in Miami before retiring from the sport in 2001.[191] In 1992, a schism appeared in the religion as a group of about forty practitioners were expelled. They formed a rival, smaller group, the Apostles of the Last Days, espousing the belief that Raël had been the original spokesman of the Elohim but had been taken over by Satan.[192]

In 1992, the Raëlian Movement bought 115 hectares near Valcourt in Quebec, naming this property Le Jardin du Prophète ("the Garden of the Prophet").[172] It was here in 1997 that the organisation opened UFOland, a museum about ufology. Its purpose was to raise money for the Elohim Embassy, but in 2001 it closed to the public, having proved financially unviable.[193] It was also during 1997, a month after Ian Wilmut announced the birth of Dolly the Sheep, a successful clone, that Raël established the company Valiant Venture to explore the commercial applications of cloning.[194] Through it came Clonaid, of which the Raëlian Bishop Brigitte Boisselier was co-founder, director, and spokesperson.[9] The initiation of this group and its promotion of human cloning incited much debate among other religious figures, scientists, and ethicists.[9] Raël and Boisselier both spoke before US President Bill Clinton's Congress hearing on human cloning in March 2001.[195]

At the July 1998 training camp in the Jardins des Prophètes, Raël announced that in December 1997 he had received another revelation from the Elohim, commanding him to form a new grouping within the Raëlian Movement, the Order of Raël's Angels.[196] This was to be a secret society,[130] open only to women who would become the consorts of the Elohim after their arrival on Earth.[196] A newsletter, Plumes d'Ange (Angel Feathers), was issued containing information about the Order.[156] Palmer noted that by emphasizing the unique qualities of women, this group challenged the established Raëlian doctrine that men and women are wholly equal and interchangeable.[130]

Brigitte Boisselier (left) took on a senior role in the Raëlian Movement.

In 2001, Raël toured Asia, giving seminars.[197] That year he married for a second time, to a 16-year-old ballet student. Raëlism discourages marriage, and this instance was done for expediency, because he had been questioned by customs officials when traveling with her across borders. They subsequently divorced but remained a couple.[198] In November 2002, a local man vandalised the group's Jardins des Prophètes property, causing significant damage.[199] Raël stated that this had been a preliminary test of "The Abraham Project", which is a joint operation between the Central Intelligence Agency and the French intelligence agencies to assassinate him via using schizophrenic people who are directed via mind-control.[200]

In December 2002, Boisselier announced that Clonaid's work had resulted in the birth of a baby, named Eve, which she claimed was the world's first human clone.[201] The child was not presented for scrutiny by scientists:[202] the IRM's allegations regarding Baby Eve were never substantiated by the scientific community.[93] Many commentators believed the announcement had been a hoax.[203] In January 2003 the Raëlians declared that Eve's parents had hidden themselves to evade attention.[204] Baby Eve's appearance gained the Raëlians much international press coverage,[93] and also much ridicule.[205] The group claimed this publicity generated around 5000 new members.[206] Boisselier announced periodically that further clone infants had been born, in the Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, and Australia, although the press increasingly

deemed these hoaxes and stopped attending Raëlian press conferences.[202]

In January 2003, Raël announced Boisselier as his appointed successor,[202] and also published *The Maitreya*, in which he identified himself with the eponymous figure from Buddhist prophecy.[59] In response to Raël's association with Clonaid, South Korean immigration authorities denied him entry to their country in 2003.[207] The group then protested near South Korea's Ministry of Health and Welfare that ordered him to leave. [207] Raël appeared alongside a group of women, "Raël's Girls", in the October 2004 issue of *Playboy*. [6][208] In 2005, two amateur documentary makers, Abdullah Hashem and Joseph McGowen, attended and filmed a Raëlian seminar in Las Vegas, claiming that they were making a student film. They then used the footage as the basis of a documentary, which they presented as an exposé of the group.[209] In 2009, the Church announced plans for a new UFOland in Las Vegas.[6]

Organization and structure

The Raëlian Movement is a strictly hierarchical organization,[185] in which there are two levels of membership.[210] The majority of members are referred to simply as "Raëlians", [8] whereas the members who are in the higher levels, which control the Movement, are referred to as "the structure".[211]

Member hierarchy

The Structure is divided along a six-tiered system.[212] Raël is at the top of the Raëlian Church, being referred to as the "Guide of Guides".[185] Senior members of the Structure re-elect him to that position each seven years.[154] Below Raël are the "Bishop Guides", then the "Priest Guides", then the "Animators", then the "Assistant Animators", and finally the "Probationers".[8] Those who are characterized as "Guides" are expected to be exemplars for the rest of the movement, for instance by strictly adhering to the avoidance of alcohol, caffeine, and recreational drugs.[110] Race, gender, and sexual orientation are no barrier to rising through the ranks of the group's leadership structure.[130] However, Palmer noted that by the mid-1990s, there were few women in leadership positions within the organisation.[213]

Members of the Raëlian structure begin as level 0 "trainees" during annual seminars. The Raëlian structure was said in 2007 to have about 2,300 members,[214] 170 "Raëlian guides", [215] and 41 bishops.[216]

Three Raëlian Bishops sit on a "Council of the Wise", which monitors heresy and arranges punishment for transgressors.[217] When they seek to punish an individual, it is usually for a seven-year "excommunication". It lasts seven years because Raëlians believe that it takes this long for every cell in the human body to be replaced.[8] In more severe cases, the council can oversee a "demarking", by which they cancel the transmission of the cellular code, believing that this revokes the individual's hope for immortality through cloning.[8]

Members pay an annual membership fee to the Raëlian Movement.[154] Full members

of the Movement are encouraged to tithe 10% of their income to the organisation.[218] This tithe is then divided up, with 3% going to the national branch and 7% to the International Movement's central administration.[219] An additional, 1% may go to Raël himself.[97] Tithing is however not enforced.[220] In her research, Palmer found many practitioners who admitted to not paying the tithe.[115] A 1991 survey of Raélians found that a third of respondents did not pay,[221] while in an interview, Raël suggested that over 60 percent do not.[97] It is these tithes and membership fees, coupled with the sales of Raël's books, that represent the International Raëlian Movement's main income.[132] This money is then saved toward the construction of the Elohim Embassy or spent on the production of flyers, books, videos, and other material that is used to disseminate the Raëlian message.[97]

The group initially owned a country estate in Albi, France, before later obtaining one in Valcourt, Quebec.[8]

Order of Angels

In 1998, Raël established an internal all-female group, the Order of Raël's Angels, whose members are trained to become the consorts of the Elohim.[127] He stated that these women would be the only humans permitted contact with the Elohim after the latter arrive on Earth.[222] He further claimed that they will serve as the Elohim's liaisons with human politicians, scientists, and journalists.[222] Raël stated that it was only women who could be Angels because men were not feminine enough for the extremely gentle, delicate, and sensitive Elohim.[222] Trans women were permitted entry; Raël praised one transgender member for "choosing to be a woman".[126]

Raëlian women at the "Korea Love Hug" festival in Seoul, South Korea

The Angels are meant to cultivate their feminine and nurturing side.[223] They are tasked with pursuing self-transformation, striving to please the Elohim and to resemble them more closely by cultivating discipline, serenity, harmony, purity, humility, charisma, and both internal and external beauty.[224] The Angels are instructed to regularly pray to the Elohim and regularly meditate.[197] They are encouraged to limit their meat consumption and to avoid carbohydrates and sugar so as to maintain their physical beauty.[126] They have proved useful for the group's public relations and have also provided volunteers for its human cloning experiments.[225][226] The Order has also engaged in the selling of human ova on the internet, launching a website to do so in 1999.[227] Raël stated that this would help the Angels achieve financial independence.[122]

The Order of Raël's Angels has a six-tiered structure, symmetrical with the six-tiered structure of the Raëlian Movement as a whole.[228] Raël divides the Angels into three groups: the White, Pink, and Golden Ribbon Angels.[228] White Angels wear white feathers on a necklace, can choose human lovers, and are tasked with operating in the world to attract more women into the Raëlian movement.[229] Pink Angels wear a pink feather on a necklace and are considered by Raël to be the "Chosen Ones" who will

become the consorts of the Elohim. They are expected to live a sequestered life, initially in the Jardins des Prophètes community, and are expected to reserve their sexual activity for the extraterrestrials.[230] The Gold Ribbon Angels are characterised by a gold cord worn around the neck. They are handpicked by Raël for their physical beauty, and are described as being the first humans who will approach the Elohim on the latter's arrival on Earth.[230] The Pink and Gold Ribbon Angels are expected to abstain from sexual activity with most other humans but should receive instruction in alien lovemaking from Raël himself as well as engaging in sexual acts alone or with other Angels.[231]

The Order was insulated from the rest of the religion, with the Angels' living quarters for instance being off-limits to non-Angels.[232] Access to the Angels is strictly limited for both journalists and scholars.[233] Gold Ribbon Angels have been demoted from this status as they have aged, on the explanation that as their physical beauty has deteriorated they are no longer suited to greeting the Elohim. These demoted individuals are then tasked with training younger replacements.[234] Other individuals have been deprived of their status as Angels altogether, when they are perceived to have acted in contravention of the group's ethos.[235]

The initiation rites include declaring an oath or making a contract in which one agrees to become defender of the Raëlian ideology and its founder Raël.[170][236] A few days later, Time magazine wrote that French chemist Brigitte Boisselier was an Order of Angels member.[237] Around this time, cult specialist Mike Kropveld termed the Order of Angels "one of the most transparent movements" he had witnessed, though he was alarmed by the women's promise to defend Raël's life with their own bodies.[236]

Raël has instructed some women members to play a pro-sex feminist role in the Raëlian Church. "Rael's Girls" is another group of women in the religion which are against the suppression of feminine acts of pleasure, including sexual intercourse with men or women. Rael's Girls consists solely of women who work in the sex industry.[238] The women of Rael's Girls say there is not any reason to repent for performing striptease or being a prostitute.[238][239] This organization was established "to support the choice of the women who are working in the sex industry".[240]

Outreach and advocacy

Raëlians protesting the South Korean government's 2003 ban on Raël entering the country

The International Raëlian Movement has established various projects through which to promote its ideology.[241] In 1997 it created Clonaid, a company devoted to human cloning.[241] Clients can bank a sample of their DNA with the group, which offers to then produce a single clone of the individual after they die.[241] Another Raëlian company, Ovulaid, seeks to provide ovaries for individuals and couples who cannot biologically produce their offspring.[241] It expresses its intention to develop technologies that can create "designer babies" to the desired specification of their client.

[241] An additional project, Insuraclone, is designed to clone organs for an individual in the event of future organ failure,[242] while Clonapet intended to clone people's pets after the latter died.[241]

The Raélians are known for their socio-political activism, specifically for women's rights, gay rights, opposition to racism, banning nuclear testing, and promoting genetically-modified foods.[133] Throughout the history of Raëlism, members of the Raëlian Church have toured public settings advocating masturbation, condoms, and birth control.[226] Through its activities, Palmer stated that the Raëlian Movement was involved in "concocting, then carefully monitoring, a mild level of cultural conflict" to generate publicity for the group,[243] something coupled with "blatant courtship of the media".[244] She compared these tactics to those of Anton LaVey's Church of Satan in the 1960s and 1970s.[243] When media has adopted a mocking tone toward the religion, Raël has urged its followers to defend their beliefs, resulting in letter-writing campaigns and sometimes lawsuits.[244]

In 1992, the IRM launched protests against the Montreal Catholic School Commission's decision to veto the addition of condom machines to the bathrooms of Roman Catholic high schools in Quebec. The Raélians parked a "condom-mobile" outside Roman Catholic high schools in Quebec and Ontario from which they dispensed contraceptives to the pupils.[245] In 1993, the Raélians organized a conference on masturbation in Quebec, at which speeches were given by Raël and Betty Dodson. Advertising this cause, Raélians handed out badges with "Oui à la masturbation (Yes to masturbation)" on them at the Montreal Jazz Festival.[246]

Raélians promoting "Go Topless Day" in Paris in 2018

In 2000, the Raélians launched NOPEDO, a group to combat paedophilia.[133] In 2001, they publicly distributed leaflets in Italy and Switzerland protesting the existence of over a hundred child molesters among Roman Catholic clergy in France. Geneva's Episcopal vicar sued the Raëlian Church for libel but the judge dismissed the charges as the Raëlian accusation was deemed to only target convicted priests and not the Roman Catholic Church as a whole.[247] In 2002, Raélians held an anti-clerical parade in Montreal, where they gave high school students Christian crosses and invited the students to both burn them and sign letters of apostasy to the Roman Catholic Church. The Quebec Association of Bishops called this "incitement to hatred", and several school boards attempted to prevent their students from meeting Raélians.[248]

The movement supports genetically-modified foods.[107] In 2003, naked members arranged themselves into the shape of the phrases "J'aime OGM" and "I love GM" in a Quebec field.[249] In 2006, about 30 Raélians, some of them topless, took part in an anti-war demonstration in Seoul, South Korea.[250] In 2003, Raélians in white alien costumes bore signs bearing the message "NO WAR ... ET wants Peace, too!" to protest the 2003 Invasion of Iraq.[251] In 2009 it launched its "Adopt a Clitoris" project to raise money to create a hospital in Africa to reverse damage caused by female genital

mutilation (FGM);[252] it has also established Clitoraid, an organization whose mission is to oppose FGM.[253][254] Another of the groups established by the Raëlian Church is ARAMIS (Active Raelian Association for Multiplicity In Sexuality),[1] which is the Raëlian Association of Sexual Minorities and an LGBT rights group.[133]

Several Raëlian groups in the United States have organized annual protests, claiming that women should have the same legal right to go topless in public that men enjoy without fear of arrest for indecent exposure.[255] Some people have called this a publicity stunt designed to recruit members.[256] Go Topless Day is their annual event, with women protesting topless except for nipple pasties to avoid arrest. It is held near 26 August, the anniversary of Women's Equality Day.[257]

Demographics

Main article: Demographics of Raëlism

Established in France, Raëlism initially spread in Francophone areas of Europe, Africa, and North America.[76] As of the mid-1990s, membership clustered predominantly in France, Quebec, and Japan.[103] Palmer noted that in Canada, Raëlism had faced difficulty spreading from Quebec and into the country's Anglophone provinces.[161] In 1999, Bozeman said that the Movement had around 35,000 members,[42] while in 2003 Chryssides said it had about 55,000 members worldwide.[19] By the early 2010s, the group was claiming 60,000 members internationally, a number Palmer and Sentes thought was "probably inflated".[258] In Britain, the sociologist Eileen Barker said that there were "only a dozen or so" committed members of the religion in 1989.[259] By 2001, the sociologist David V. Barrett suggested that there were around 40 to 50 committed members in the country and around 500 sympathisers;[76] two years later, Chryssides thought there were about 40 members and 200 sympathisers in Britain.[19]

An internal survey of the group's members in 1988 found that there were almost double as many men as women in the Movement.[260] Similarly, based on her attendance at Raëlian events in Quebec, Palmer noted that men usually outnumbered women.[161] She observed that many of the men acted in an effeminate fashion,[161] and were often attracted to other men.[131] Palmer also observed several transgender people at the meetings,[261] and found that a significant number of the women present worked as strippers.[131] On these grounds, she suggested that Raëlism had a particular appeal for "people who define themselves as sexually marginal".[261] Palmer also suggested that Raëlism had an appeal for "committed atheists who are hopelessly secularized yet suffering from the existential angst of living in a world devoid of order and higher values".[262]

Conversion

A Raëlian lecturing on his religion at Onyang High School in South Korea

Raëlians engage in missionary activities to attract converts.[97] Members buy Raël's books to sell on the street, hoping to recoup their original costs.[132] They often encounter much resistance to their attempts to convert others; Raël explains that this is

to be expected, for the Elohim told him that only 4% of humanity is intelligent enough to be receptive to the Raëlian message.[97] Any Raëlian found trying to force someone to convert is banned from the organisation for seven years, the period which Raëlians believe it takes for every cell in the body to be replaced.[103]

Since 1979, new members of the Raëlian Movement have been expected to sign an "Act of Apostasy",[263] and send a letter of apostasy to any religious organisation that they were previously involved with.[264] They also sign a contract which permits a mortician to cut a piece of bone from their forehead after death, which they understand as the "Third Eye". This specimen will be stored in ice at a Swiss facility until the Elohim return, at which time it may be used to clone the deceased individual.[265] This process is known as "the lifting of the frontal bone".[160] In addition, people who join are expected to bequeath their assets to the local Raëlian group,[59] although this is not obligatory.[160]

Some former Christian clergy-members have joined the Raëlians, sometimes being swiftly promoted to the level of Priest or Bishop due to the skills that are brought with them from their previous religious organisation.[266] In 2004, for example, Ron Boston, a former bishop of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, joined the Raëlian Movement, stating that doing so would allow him to embrace his homosexuality.[267]

Reception

According to sociologist Susan J. Palmer, in society, Raëlism is "universally mocked", [268] and even at conferences of scholars of religion, where individuals are accustomed to studying a diverse range of belief systems, attendees have treated Raëlian beliefs with "incredulity or even mirth".[19] Non-members often regard Raël's claims as a deliberate forgery to fool his followers.[269] An especially critical reception has come from ex-Raëlians and the anti-cult movement.[88] Jean-Denis Saint-Cyr, a high-ranking member of the Raëlian movement, for example, accused Raël of plagiarizing the earlier writings of Sendy in creating his religion.[88] Another prominent apostate, namely the Quebecois Erick Lamarche, who calls himself "Extraël", quit while claiming that too much money was being donated to Raël and the senior members so that they could have luxurious lifestyles.[270] Critics repeatedly drew comparisons between Raëlism and national-socialism, because of the former's promotion of a governance system wherein people are graded by their intelligence,[271] its emphasis upon genetic engineering, [271] and its use of the swastika.[272]

A group of Raëlians protesting for gay rights in Vienna, Austria

Raëlism has undergone academic research from scholars of religion, especially from Palmer, who first encountered the religion in Montreal in 1987.[273] She initially thought that she "had never encountered an NRM that was so cooperative, that actually liked being studied".[274] Between 2002 and 2003, Palmer was blacklisted by the group; they banned her from their meetings and told her that she had lost the opportunity to meet the Elohim when they arrive.[275] Palmer then drew upon both her interviews with active

members and Raël's publications for her 2004 book on Raëlism: Aliens Adored.[276]

Palmer stated that journalists that she had encountered were often "fishing" for "bad things" to say about the Raélians.[277] Many journalists sought to portray Raël as a danger to his followers, akin to David Koresh or Jim Jones, although Palmer thought this to be "ludicrous", stating that Raël was "not prone to violence".[36] Journalists also sought to present him as someone who sexually exploited his female members, which again Palmer found no evidence for.[278] Following statements that the Order of Raël's Angels would do anything for Raël, there was also press speculation that the group would engage in mass-suicide akin to that of the Order of the Solar Temple.[279] Palmer argued that the Raélians lacked the paranoid mentality and demonization of the outside world that had been common to new religious movements that had killed people.[280]

See also

icon Religion portal

icon Human sexuality portal

Nontheistic religions – Religious thought and practice independent of belief in deities

Notes

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The Five Ks - BBC Teach

Kesh, Kara, Kanga, Kachera, and Kirpan are the Five Ks (Panj Kakar), five mandatory articles of faith for initiated Sikhs (Khalsa), symbolizing spiritual discipline and commitment, representing uncut hair, a steel bracelet, a wooden comb, cotton undergarments, and a ceremonial dagger, respectively, commanded by Guru Gobind Singh to be worn at all times as outward signs of their faith and unity.

Here's what each signifies:

Kesh (Uncut Hair): Represents spiritual devotion, a commitment to God's will, and rejecting vanity; typically covered by a turban for men and some women.

Kara (Steel Bracelet): A circle symbolizing unity with God, eternity, and reminding the wearer to do good deeds.

Kanga (Wooden Comb): Symbolizes cleanliness, orderliness, and spiritual discipline, used to keep hair tidy.

Kachera (Cotton Undergarments): Represents self-control, modesty, and readiness for action, historically worn as practical shorts.

Kirpan (Ceremonial Dagger): A sword symbolizing a Sikh's duty to defend the weak, uphold justice, and protect the oppressed.

These articles were instituted in 1699, serving as constant reminders of Sikh principles and identity.

Five K's of Sikhism - Fateh TV

Jul 11, 2020 — Five K's of Sikhism * Sikhism the Five Ks are five items that Guru Gobind Singh Ji commanded Khalsa Sikhs to wear at a...

www.fatehtvonline.com

Five Ks Definition - World Religions Key Term - Fiveable

Sep 14, 2025 — 5 Must Know Facts For Your Next Test * The Five Ks consist of Kesh (uncut hair), Kara (steel bracelet), Kanga (wooden ...

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The 5Ks of Sikhism - SikhiWiki, free Sikh encyclopedia.

May 2, 2012 — Contents * Kesh - Long, uncut hair. * Kachera - Baggy Shorts. * Kanga - Comb. * Kara - Steel Bracelet. * Kirpan - A sma...

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The Five Ks are not just symbols, but articles of faith that collectively form the external

identity and the Khalsa devotee's commitment to the Sikh rehni.

People also ask

What are the 5 Ks of Sikhs?

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Religions - Sikhism: The Five Ks

BBC

<https://www.bbc.co.uk › religions › sikhism › customs>

Sep 29, 2009 — Kara (a steel bracelet); Kanga (a wooden comb); Kaccha - also spelt, Kachh, Kachera (cotton underwear); Kirpan (steel sword). Kesh - uncut hair.

Wearing the 5K's (Kara, Kesh, Kirpan, Kacheras, Kanga)

Sikh Dharma International

<https://www.sikhdharma.org › Blog>

Mar 26, 2019 — Kesh (pronounced Kaysh) is uncut hair, is kept intact, as given by the Creator. Kanga is a wooden comb which is worn in the hair at all times. ...

Images

The Five K's : Symbols of Sikh Identity and Faith

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The Five K's in Modern Times: Relevance and Significance

Dasvandh Network

<https://dvnetwork.org> › page › the-five-ks-in-modern-ti...

These symbols - Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (wooden comb), Kara (iron bracelet), Kachera (cotton underwear), and Kirpan (sword) - were designed to unite Sikhs.

Five K's, Five Kakaars

Religion Stylebook

<https://religionstylebook.com> › entries

They are: kara, a steel bracelet; kanga, a comb; kirpan, a ceremonial dagger; kachera, undergarments; and kesh, long uncut hair that men and some women wrap in ...

5 K's in Sikhism | We The Sikhs

Alchemist Marketing

<https://alchemistindia.net> › sikh_wp

They are: kesh – uncut hair, kanga – a small comb, kara – a stainless steel bracelet, kirpan – a sword and kachera – an underwear.

The 5Ks of Sikhism: Symbols of Faith and Identity - asgc

asgc.net.au

<https://asgc.net.au> › Blog

Feb 9, 2025 — The 5Ks—Kirpan, Kara, Kesh/Keski, Kachera, and Kanga—are five articles of faith that hold deep spiritual and practical significance in Sikhism.

The 5 Ks

Monkey Monkey Revision

<https://www.monkeymonkeyrevision.co.uk> › page

Kesh means uncut hair. These five Ks—Kesh, Kangha, Kara, Kachera, and Kirpan—are important symbols that represent the Sikh faith and identity.

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Kanga, Kara and Kirpan – three of the five Ks

In Sikhism, the Five Ks (Punjabi: ਪੰਜ ਕਕਾਰ, Pañj Kakār, Punjabi pronunciation: [ˈpənd͡ʒ.ˈkə.kaːɾ]) are five items that Guru Gobind Singh, in 1699, commanded Khalsa Sikhs to wear at all times. They are: kesh (ਕੇਸ਼, keś, unshorn hair and beard since the Sikh decided to keep it), kangha (ਕੰਘਾ, kāṅghā, a comb for the kesh, usually wood), kara (ਕੜਾ, kaṛā, a bracelet, usually made of iron or steel), kachhera (ਕਛੈਰਾ, kachairā, an undergarment), and kirpan (ਕਿਰਪਾਨ, kirpān, a small curved sword or knife made of iron or steel).[1]

The Five Ks are not just symbols, but articles of faith that collectively form the external identity and the Khalsa devotee's commitment to the Sikh rehni, 'Sikh way of life'.[2] A Sikh who has taken Amrit and keeps all five Ks is known as Khalsa ('pure') or Amritdhari Sikh ('Amrit Sanskar participant'), a Sikh who has not taken Amrit but follows the

teachings of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib is called a Sahajdhari Sikh.

Kesh

Main article: Kesh

A Sikh man having Kesh(hairs) of long beard and head hairs ,wearing a turban
The kesh, also known as kesa, or uncut, long hair, is considered by Sikhs to be an indispensable part of the human body. It also emulates the appearance of Guru Gobind Singh and is one of the primary signs by which a Sikh can be clearly and quickly identified. A Sikh never cuts or trims any hair as a symbol of respect for the perfection of God's creation. The uncut long hair and the beard, in the case of men, form the main kakār for Sikhs.[3]

The turban is a spiritual crown, which is a constant reminder to the Sikh that they are sitting on the throne of consciousness and are committed to living according to Sikh principles. Guru Gobind Singh told his Sikhs:

"Khalsa mero roop hai khaas. Khalsa mai ho karo nivaas... The Khalsa is my image. Within the Khalsa I reside."[4] Wearing a turban declares sovereignty, dedication, self-respect, courage and piety.

A noted figure in Sikh history is Bhai Taru Singh, who was martyred when he refused to get his kesh cut.

Kangha

Main article: Kangha

Kangha – one of the five articles of faith for the Sikhs
Comb the hair twice a day, covering it with turban that is to be tied from fresh.

—Tankhanama Bhai Nand Lal Singh[5]

A kanga is a medium-sized wooden comb that Sikhs use twice a day. It is supposed to be worn only in the hair and at all times. Combs help to clean and remove tangles from the hair and are a symbol of cleanliness. Combing their hair reminds Sikhs that their lives should be tidy and organized.

The comb keeps the hair tidy, a symbol of not just accepting what God has given, but also an injunction to maintain it with grace. The Guru Granth Sahib said hair should be allowed to grow naturally; this precludes any shaving for both men and women. In the Guru's time, some holy men let their hair become tangled and dirty. The Guru said that this was not right; that hair should be allowed to grow but it should be kept clean and combed at least twice a day.[6][7]

Kara

Main article: Kara

Kara – one of the five articles of faith for the Sikhs

The Sikhs were commanded by Guru Gobind Singh at the Baisakhi Amrit Sanchar in 1699 to wear an iron bracelet called a Kara at all times. The kara is a constant reminder that whatever a person does with their hands has to be in keeping with the advice given by the Guru. The kara is an iron/steel circle to symbolize God as never-ending. It is a symbol of permanent bonding to the community, of being a link in the chain of Khalsa Sikhs (the word for link is Kari). The kara should be of a cheap metal, such as iron or steel, to show equality and so that nobody can be shown as more important than anybody else with the material of their kara.[6]

Kachhera

A Sikh wearing Kachera, after taking bath in the holy (perceived) water tank (Sarovar) at Golden Temple Amritsar.

Kachhera

Main article: Kacchera

ਸੀਲ ਜਤ ਕੀ ਕਛ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਪਕਿੜਓ ਹਿਥਆਰਾ ॥ The sign of true chastity is the Kachhera, you must wear this and hold weapons in hand.

—Bhai Gurdas Singh, Var. 41, pauri 15

The Kachhera is a shalwar-underwear with a tie-knot worn by Baptised Sikhs. Originally, the Kachhera was made part of the five Ks as a symbol of a Sikh soldier's willingness to be ready at a moment's notice for battle or for defense. The confirmed Sikh (one who has taken the Amrit) wears a Kachhera every day. Some of them go to the extent of wearing a Kachhera while bathing, to be ready at a moment's notice, changing into the new one a single leg at a time, so as to have no moment where they are unprepared. Further, this garment allowed the Sikh soldier to operate in combat freely and without any hindrance or restriction, because it was easy to fabricate, maintain, wash, and carry compared to other traditional undergarments of that era, like the dhoti. The Kachhera symbolizes self-respect, and always reminds the wearer of mental control over lust, one of the Five Evils in Sikh philosophy.

The Kachhera follows a generally practical and roomy design. It features an embedded string that circles the waist which can be tightened or loosened as desired and then knotted securely. The Kachhera can be classed between underwear and an outer garment, as in appearance it does not reveal private anatomy, and looks and wears like shorts. As with all of the Five Ks, there is equality between men and women, and so women are also expected to wear it. Considering the hot climate in India, the Kachhera is often worn by men as an outer garment, keeping the wearer cool and being practical in manual work such as farming, but it is generally not considered respectful for women to wear the Kacchera as an outer garment (on its own) as it is considered too revealing. [6]

Kirpan

Main article: Kirpan

19th century Indian tulwar sword

Siri Sahib ,one of five symbols of Sikhism ,Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur ,Pakistan
ਸ਼ਸਤਰ ਹੀਨ ਕਬਹੂ ਨਹਿ ਹੋਈ, ਰਿਹਤਵੰਤ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਸੋਈ ॥Those who never depart their arms, they are
the Khalsa with excellent rehats.

—Rehatnama Bhai Desa Singh[citation needed]

The kirpan is a dagger that symbolises a Sikh's duty to come to the defense of those in peril. All Sikhs should wear the kirpan on their body at all times as a defensive side-arm, just as a police officer is expected to wear a side-arm when on duty. Its use is only allowed in the act of self-defense and the protection of others. It stands for bravery and protecting the weak and innocent.

The kirpan is kept sharp and is actually used to defend others, such as those who are oppressed by harsh rulers, or a person who is being robbed, raped, or beaten. The true Sikh cannot turn a blind eye to such evils, thinking that they are "someone else's concern." [7] It is the duty of the true Sikh to help those who suffer unjustly, by whatever means available, whether that means alerting the police, summoning help, or defending those who cannot defend themselves, even if that means putting oneself in harm's way. [6]

Panj Kapde

The Five Ks are the bare minimum and are not the full extent of Khalsa uniform; the Panj Kapde is also part of Khalsa uniform. It is part of the tradition of panj kapare (five garments), comprising dastaar (turban), hazooria (long white scarf worn around the neck), long chola (dress), kamar-kasaa (material tied around the waist like a belt) and kacchera (under-garment). Reference to this has been made by Varan Bhai Gurdas as well. The dastaar and kachera are mandatory for Sikhs although more spiritual Sikhs also have the other kapde.

Dastaar

A dastār (Punjabi: ਦਸਤਾਰ, from Persian: دستار) which derives from dast-e-yār or 'the hand of God', [citation needed] is an item of headwear associated with Sikhism, and is an important part of Sikh culture. The word is loaned from Persian through Punjabi. In Persian, the word dastār can refer to any kind of turban and replaced the original word for turban, dolband (دل‌بند), from which the English word is derived.

Among the Sikhs, the dastār is an article of faith that represents equality, honour, self-respect, courage, spirituality, and piety. The Khalsa Sikh men and women, who keep the Five Ks, wear the turban to cover their long, uncut hair (kesh). The Sikhs regard the

dastār as an important part of the unique Sikh identity. After the ninth Sikh Guru, Tegh Bahadur, was sentenced to death by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru created the Khalsa and gave five articles of faith, one of which is unshorn hair, which the dastār covers.

Sikh chola

Sikh chola is traditional dress worn by Sikhs. It is a martial attire that gives freedom of movement to a Sikh warrior. Sikh chola is also unisex attire, and may also be decorated with heavy embroidery all over it. It is meant to be either yellow, white or electric blue with many pockets to hold matchlocks[8] and other weapons.

Kamar kasa

Kamar kasa is a sash bound around the waist to hold weapons an essential part of Nihang (Sikh warrior) dress. It is also called cumberband, belt, waist sash, or waistband. The Kamar kasa is meant to be yellow if wearing a blue chola or blue if wearing a white chola.

Hazooria

Nihang Sikhs wearing chakrams

A hazooria (scarf) is a sign of humility which is grasped during the Ardās. It is a constant reminder of surrendering one's mind to the Guru, along with the five Ks. A hazooria is practical: it helps one keep suchamta (cleanliness) during seva (service) or reading Gurbani (hymns). It can help keep the hands clean when touching the face or picking up objects. The hazooria was also worn by servants and symbolises the Sikh surrendering to Waheguruji as their master.

See also

Sikhism

Amrit Sanchar

Vaisakhi

Khalsa and Sir-Gums

Gursikh

Amritdhari

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External links

The Five Sikh Symbols – SikhismGuide.org

The Sikh Symbols – eBook

The Sikh Bangle (Kara) – eBook

"The Five Symbols of Sikhism: Some Contemporary Issues", by Bhupinder Singh, Sikh Missionary Society U.K., 25 February 2014

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Seasonal Holidays 2025

Aurat / Ten Bodies (Sikhism) → Layers of the human energy field and their functional roles.

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AI Overview

In the spiritual teachings of Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bajan (which has ties to Sikh Dharma), the human being is comprised of ten interconnected bodies: one physical body, three mental bodies, and six energy bodies. These layers form the complete human energy field and each has a specific functional role and characteristic.

Here are the ten bodies and their functional roles:

1. **Soul Body:** This body represents your inner infinity and connection to your higher purpose. Its function is to guide you with humility and creativity, living from the heart rather than solely the intellect.
2. **Negative Mind (Protective):** The role of the negative mind is protective, acting as a "seatbelt" for the soul. It helps you to be discerning, assess potential dangers, and establish boundaries for your safety.
3. **Positive Mind (Expansive):** This mind is the expansive and inspirational aspect, seeing possibilities and the potential good in situations. When balanced, it fosters self-esteem, resourcefulness, and a hopeful perspective.
4. **Neutral Mind (Meditative):** Also called the meditative mind, it takes input from both the negative and positive minds, then uses intuition to provide unbiased, optimal guidance and lead you to the best decisions.
5. **Physical Body:** This is the physical manifestation that houses the other nine bodies and allows for interaction with the earthly plane. Its function is to translate karmic actions into dharmic actions (living your purpose).
6. **Arc Body (Arcline):** A line of energy extending from earlobe to earlobe (often depicted as a halo), this body is your projected persona and helps you focus and regulate your nervous system. It also acts as a shield, protecting you from negative energy projected by others.
7. **Auric Body (Aura):** This is the electromagnetic field of energy that surrounds the physical body, expanding up to nine feet in all directions. It contains your life force and acts as a primary protective shield, attracting positive things when strong.
8. **Pranic Body:** The Pranic Body controls the breath and draws prana, or the universe's life force energy, into your system. A strong Pranic Body ensures vitality, energy, and a resilient immune system; imbalance can lead to disease.
9. **Subtle Body:** This body allows you to perceive the subtlety of life and reality beyond the immediate physical world. It helps you to see the "bigger picture" with calmness and finesse.
10. **Radiant Body:** The final body gives you spiritual royalty, radiance, and charisma. A strong Radiant Body provides immense courage, a magnetic presence, and acts as a powerful shield against all challenges.

Balancing and strengthening these ten bodies through practices like Kundalini Yoga, meditation, and breathwork helps align the human energy field, leading to wholeness, clarity, and spiritual growth.

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Aurat / Ten Bodies (Sikhism) → Layers of the human energy field and their functional roles.

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AI Overview

In the spiritual teachings of Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bajan (which has ties to Sikh Dharma), the human being is comprised of ten interconnected bodies: one physical body, three mental bodies, and six energy bodies. These layers form the complete human energy field and each has a specific functional role and characteristic.

Here are the ten bodies and their functional roles:

1. **Soul Body:** This body represents your inner infinity and connection to your higher purpose. Its function is to guide you with humility and creativity, living from the heart rather than solely the intellect.
2. **Negative Mind (Protective):** The role of the negative mind is protective, acting as a "seatbelt" for the soul. It helps you to be discerning, assess potential dangers, and establish boundaries for your safety.
3. **Positive Mind (Expansive):** This mind is the expansive and inspirational aspect, seeing possibilities and the potential good in situations. When balanced, it fosters self-esteem, resourcefulness, and a hopeful perspective.
4. **Neutral Mind (Meditative):** Also called the meditative mind, it takes input from both the negative and positive minds, then uses intuition to provide unbiased, optimal guidance and lead you to the best decisions.
5. **Physical Body:** This is the physical manifestation that houses the other nine bodies and allows for interaction with the earthly plane. Its function is to translate karmic actions into dharmic actions (living your purpose).
6. **Arc Body (Arcline):** A line of energy extending from earlobe to earlobe (often depicted as a halo), this body is your projected persona and helps you focus and regulate your nervous system. It also acts as a shield, protecting you from negative energy projected by others.
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Posted November 11, 2016 by Shakti Parwha Kaur Khalsa & filed under Publications,
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This article is excerpted from Kundalini Yoga: The Flow of Eternal Power, written by Shakti Parwha Kaur Khalsa.

We know that we have a physical body. We can see it, touch it, feel it, and so can other people. But most of us are not aware that we have other bodies, which are equally real, if not more so. The funny thing is that we identify so strongly with our physical bodies, that we think of ourselves primarily in physical terms.

It seems as if the physical body becomes the focus of our whole identity. As important and valuable as the physical body is, it is not who we are, because who we are—our essential self—can never change.

You certainly don't have the same physical body you were born with, yet you know you're still you. You are not your body or your mind. You are much more permanent than that. Sat Nam isn't born weighing six pounds-nine ounces, growing to 120 pounds; Sat Nam doesn't get the measles, go through menopause, or worry about dry skin. Sat Nam

is your eternal true identity. It is who you are, who you were, and who you will be, now and forever. Truth is your identity.

You might visualize your various bodies as layers of clothing, the physical body being the overcoat you wear for a lifetime. During your whole life, rain or shine, summer or winter, you never take it off, so you don't see the beautiful jacket or suit underneath, much less the dress or shirt under that. Until you develop a special kind of "x-ray" vision, you definitely never see the body that is wearing all those garments, which is the Soul.

1. The Soul Body. The first body is the Soul Body. It is your very best friend. It is God's light which lives in your heart. The Soul Body never dies. It goes with you forever. It's a good idea to get acquainted with it as soon as possible and develop an ongoing communication. The best time to get the conversation going is during morning sadhana.

The Three Mental Bodies

mind-lightHere's a brief summary of the three main aspects of the Mind, the body that many people mistakenly identify with.

2. The Negative Mind protects you by warning you what could be the danger or loss in any situation.

3. The Positive Mind inspires you by telling you what is the possible gain, the advantage to you, in any situation.

4. The Neutral Mind listens to the intellectual input from both the Negative Mind and the Positive Mind and then leads you to the best decision, using unbiased intuitive knowledge. Whenever you want to reach outside of yourself, reach out with your Neutral Mind. It is a most graceful, wonderful secret of success.

5. Physical Body

The Physical Body was given to you so you could participate fully in life on this planet. It is a temple for God to live in while He sees through your eyes and hears through your ears. You were given the physical body so God could experience and enjoy His creation. The physical is a balance point between heaven and earth. The key to perfecting the Physical Body is balance: balance in diet; balance in exercise; balance in work, play, and rest. It always makes sense to avoid extremes. Don't be lazy and don't be fanatic.

6. Arc Bodyauric-body

The Arc Body or Arcline is a line of energy that goes in an arc from ear tip to ear tip. It is sometimes called your "halo." This spiritual body projects who you are to other people without a word being spoken. It also protects you from negative energy directed towards you. Have you ever felt something, and turned around to find someone was staring at you? That's one experience of your arcline in action.

7. Auric Body

The Auric Body or Aura is a sphere of electromagnetic energy that surrounds the physical body. It can extend up to nine feet in every direction. This body protects you and also gives you the ability to uplift yourself and others. Some people can see the auric body as a field of flowing colored light. You may have experienced the auric body when you were near someone and simply felt their energy. Being in the aura of a spiritual and loving person is peaceful and healing. As the energy field of their aura interacts with ours, it automatically elevates us. (Remember, "Spirituality cannot be taught, it has to be caught, like the measles. You get it from someone who's got it.")

8. Pranic Body

The Pranic Body controls the breath and takes in Prana, the life force energy of the Universe. The Pranic Body gives you energy, courage, control over your mind, and healing power. When you breathe, you are feeding your Pranic Body. As you practice pranayam, you'll experience the expansion and strength of this body.

9. Subtle Body

The Subtle Body gives you the opportunity to understand and master the subtlety of life. It can help you understand what is going on around you and how things work. Those people who can tune into situations easily or pick up new skills as if by magic, have developed the Subtle Body.

As the Mahan Tantric, Yogi Bhanjan has explained that he always teaches with his Subtle Body. We have experienced the projection of his powerful presence during his White Tantric Yoga® video courses. Even though his physical body may not be there, his Subtle Body most definitely is present and actively engaged with us.

10. Radiant Body

The Radiant Body gives you spiritual royalty and radiance. A strong Radiant Body will make you courageous in the face of any and every obstacle. Good things are drawn to you through a developed and powerful Radiant Body. On a practical level, people with well-developed Radiant Bodies are said to have "charisma." Their very presence works for them before they say one word. They virtually "shine."

Yogi Bhanjan on the Ten Bodies

"You are a total combination of ten bodies. You have a Spiritual Body, you have three Mental Bodies (Negative, Positive, and Neutral); then you have this Physical Body, the Arc Body (which you call "halo"); and you have the simple Auric Body and a Subtle Body, Pranic Body, and a Radiant Body. These ten bodies are interlocked, but two are

free to leave.

“Whenever the soul desires to leave the Physical Body, the Arc Body and all the other bodies remain behind because they have no combination. The Physical Body’s pranic connection with the Pranic Body totally breaks, and the Soul leaves with the Subtle Body. That means, your identity is gone. (Your physical body remains, but “you” are gone. We call it death.)

“But do you understand what that indicates? If, in subtlety you become very refined, and in activity you become very subtle, very subtle, you are very near to your Soul. The Spirit and the Subtle body are very much related. There’s a direct relationship between the Subtle body and the Spiritual body. They never leave each other. So, anything you do which is refined—refined art, refined acts, refined speech, anything which is not gross—will put you nearer to the Soul. That’s rather a simple way of reaching your God-consciousness.”

shaktiparwhak_200This article is excerpted from Kundalini Yoga: The Flow of Eternal Power, written by Shakti Parwha Kaur Khalsa.

Shakti Parwha Kaur Khalsa was Yogi Bhajan’s first student in the United States. He gave her the title of the Mother of 3HO. She started teaching Kundalini Yoga in 1969. She is the author of Kundalini Yoga: The Flow of Eternal Power; Kundalini Postures and Poetry; and Marriage on the Spiritual Path: Mastering the Highest Yoga. She left this earthly plane on November 8, 2023, at the age of 94.

More Information about the 10 Bodies

Basics of the Ten Bodies

Characteristics of the Ten Bodies

***Always consult your physician before beginning this or any other exercise program. Nothing on this website is to be construed as medical advice. The benefits attributed to the practice of Kundalini Yoga come from the centuries-old yogic tradition. Results will vary with individuals

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4 thoughts on “Introduction to the Ten Bodies”

Rattan says:

October 24, 2025 at 2:01 pm

For those that have difficulty seeing, do you have recordings of these teachings so we can listen to them? Thanks.

Sikh Dharma International says:

October 24, 2025 at 3:01 pm

Sat Nam Rattan, I did a quick Google search for apps to read webpages to assist people who can't see. This is what I found: “Apps like Speechify and Voice Dream Reader convert webpage text to speech, while built-in screen readers such as VoiceOver (Apple) and TalkBack (Android) provide system-wide assistance by reading screen content aloud. Other useful apps include Be My Eyes and Aira, which connect users with live or AI-powered assistance to describe images and objects on a webpage.” I hope this helps! Blessings to you!

roop singh says:

November 18, 2016 at 11:56 am

Sat nam my self is Roop singh from India since my childhood when I was seven years old I start to find God but till now I didn't find any teacher who can teach me to find God. I have seen so many ups and down in my life. Is there any one who can teach me to complete this? In February I will become forty years old.

OngKar Kaur Khalsa says:

November 19, 2016 at 5:39 am

Sat Nam Roop Singh Ji. Our website has many practical teachings to assist with your life's journey. In particular, the videos and lectures page of Siri Singh Sahib, Yogi Bhajan: <https://www.sikhdharma.org/lectures-and-videos/>

And of course, bringing the Guru into your life through reading, chanting and meditating on Gurbani is a wonderful gift we have as Sikhs. Many Blessing to You!

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AI Overview

What You Need To Know About Three Dantian Qi - Onenergy

A Dantian (or Qi|Qigong energy center) is a vital energy hub in traditional Chinese medicine and practices like Qigong, Tai Chi, and Taoist alchemy, often called the "elixir field," where life force (Qi) is stored, refined, and circulated, with the Lower Dantian (below the navel) being crucial for grounding, vitality, and core strength, while Middle Dantian (chest) governs emotions, and the Upper Dantian (forehead/third eye) relates to spirit/consciousness.

Key Concepts

Meaning: "Dan" (丹) means elixir or cinnabar, and "Tian" (田) means field, symbolizing a place to create spiritual or physical vitality.

Function: Dantians are centers for cultivating and storing Qi (life energy) for health, longevity, and spiritual development, akin to Indian chakras.

Dantian Breathing: A deep, diaphragmatic breath that expands the lower abdomen, activating the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation, and strengthening core muscles, unlike shallow chest breathing.

The Three Dantians

Lower Dantian (Xià Dāntián):

Location: Lower abdomen, 2-3 inches below the navel.

Focus: Grounding, physical stability, reproduction, vitality (Jing), and the base for martial arts power.

Middle Dantian (Zhōng Dāntián):

Location: Center of the chest, heart level.

Focus: Emotions, respiration, blood circulation, compassion (Qi).

Upper Dantian (Shàng Dāntián):

Location: Forehead, between the eyebrows (third eye area).

Focus: Spirit, consciousness, mental clarity (Shen).

Practice & Importance

Martial Arts: Focus on the lower dantian provides powerful, grounded, and efficient movement.

Meditation/Qigong: Cultivating the dantian through breath and focus refines energy, fostering physical health and spiritual growth.

Health Benefits: Promotes deep relaxation, increased oxygen intake, better energy, and mental calm.

Three Dantian Meditation

Three Dan Tian meditation uses breath and concentration to activate the circulation of qi and blood through three areas of the bod...

Taoist Sanctuary of San Diego

The Dantian And The Taoist Internal Alchemy

Conclusion. The concept of dāntián comes essentially from Taoist internal alchemy, and it is in this discipline that it acquires i...

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Dantian

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dantian>

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What Are Dantian? The Energy Centers of Chinese Medicine

Healthline

<https://www.healthline.com/health/dantian>

Dec 28, 2020 — Dantian, or dan tian, translates from Chinese to mean “field of elixir.” It describes what's believed by some to be the seat of life force energy in the body.

What are dantian?

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[Qi Gong Q&A #1] What Is Dantian

YouTube · Dr. Alex Hui

Mar 28, 2021

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Dantian is the energy center of the human body, located 1/3 of the distance from the belly button to the spine.

Dan Tian Breathing with Dr Paul Lam | New FREE Tai Chi for ...

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Jun 30, 2023

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7:56

Dantian breathing: Breathe in, expand the belly, and breathe out, contract the pelvic floor. It enhances relaxation, healing power, and strengthens the spine.

Dantian, the Source of Internal Strength Explained.

YouTube · Hai Yang

Jun 20, 2020

YouTube · Hai Yang

31:06

6 key moments in this video

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Taoist Sanctuary of San Diego

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The Three Dan Tian meditation uses breath and concentration to activate the circulation of qi and blood through these areas.

Dantian - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics

ScienceDirect.com

<https://www.sciencedirect.com> › topics › dantian

The lower dantian 'is the body's center of gravity as well as the energy center. The dantian stores qi and drives it throughout the body.

The wonders of the dantian

Peter Deadman

<https://peterdeadman.com> › blogs › peter-deadman › th...

Mar 6, 2024 — The lower dantian – 'field of elixir' or 'cinnabar field' – is considered a vital energetic store, as well as the centre of gravity in the body.

What is the dantian? Why is lower dantian breathing ...

Dantian Health

<https://dantianhealth.com.au> › ... › Chinese Medicine

The dantian, often translated as elixir or cinnabar field, is a core energy centre of our body. A dantian is different from a chakra as it is a storehouse of ...

How has your journey been, building your lower Dantian?

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by AS Chan · 2010 · Cited by 71 — The Shaolin Dan Tian Breathing is a way to stimulate the Dan Tian region and to enhance the blood and Qi circulation. This technique consists of two components— ...

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What Are Dantian? The Energy Centers of Chinese Medicine

Dantian in traditional Chinese medicine is a center of qi, the vital life force. Three main dantian are typically emphasized: the lower dantian, situated at the lower belly, called hara in Japanese; the middle dantian, at the level of the heart; and the upper dantian, at the forehead between the eyebrows or third eye.

Source:

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Chinese: 丹田

Literal meaning: elixir-of-life field

Thai: ดันเถียน

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Dantian

1615 illustration of the neidan meditation Ying'er xianxing (嬰兒現形, Generating the [Inner] Infant) in the Lower Dantian

Chinese name

Chinese 丹田

Literal meaning elixir-of-life field

Transcriptions

Vietnamese name

Vietnamese Đan điền

Chữ Hán 丹田

Thai name

Thai ตันเถียน

RTGS dantian

Korean name

Hangul 단전

Hanja 丹田

Transcriptions

Japanese name

Kanji 丹田

Hiragana たんでん

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Dantian (Ch. 丹田; Jap: tanden) in traditional Chinese medicine is a center of qi, the vital life force. [1][2]

Three main dantian are typically emphasized:[1][2] the lower dantian, situated at the lower belly, called hara in Japanese; the middle dantian, at the level of the heart; and the upper dantian, at the forehead between the eyebrows or third eye. Jing (essence) is purified into qi (vitality) in the lower dantian; qi is refined into shen or spirit in the middle dantian; and shen is transmuted into wu wei or emptiness in the upper dantian.

The dantian are important focal points in traditional Chinese medicine, for meditative and esoteric practices such as qigong, neidan, neigong, daoyin, Taoist sexual practices, and reiki[3] and for martial arts such as tai chi.[1][2]

Etymology

Dantian (Ch. 丹田; Jap: tanden), loosely translated as "elixir field", "sea of qi", or simply "energy center."

The term dantian used by itself usually refers to the lower dantian. In Japanese, the word hara (腹; Chinese: fù), "abdomen," "belly," is often used interchangeably for the lower dantian (下丹田, Xià Dāntián). "Hara" should not be translated as "stomach," to avoid confusing it with the organ. An alternative Japanese reading of the character is Fuku, the Chinese reading is Fu.

Three dantians and the elixir-of-life

Different schools of thought categorize dantian in various manners. Three main dantian are typically emphasized, which are focal points for transmutation of the three treasures, namely jing, qi and shen:[1][2]

Lower dantian (下丹田, Xià Dāntián): at the crossing of the horizontal line behind the Ren-6 acupoint and vertical line above the perineum, which is also called "the golden stove" (金炉 pinyin: Jīn lú) or the namesake "elixir-of-life field" proper, where the process of developing the elixir by refining and purifying essence (jing) into vitality (qi) begins.[4]

Middle dantian (中丹田, Zhōng Dāntián): at the level of the heart, which is also called "the crimson palace", associated with storing spirit (shen) and with respiration and health of the internal organs, in particular the thymus gland. This cauldron is where vitality or qi is refined into shen or spirit.[5]

Upper dantian (上丹田, Shàng Dāntián): at the forehead between the eyebrows or third eye, which is also called "the muddy pellet", associated with the pineal gland. This

cauldron is where shen or spirit is transmuted into wu wei or emptiness.[6][7]

Qi can be seen as a substance when it is stored in the form of jing, this can be refined by heating in these cauldrons into more rarefied states such as qi which is insubstantial and further still into shen which is more like the Western concept of mind although it is more often translated as "spirit".[6]

The lower dantian or hara

In Chinese, Korean, and Japanese traditions, the lower dantian or hara is considered to be the physical center of gravity of the human body, and the seat of one's internal energy (qi). It is considered to be the foundation of rooted standing, grounding, breathing, and body awareness in Chinese and other martial arts including qigong. The lower dantian has been described to be "like the root of the tree of life." [2]

The lower dantian is particularly important as the focal point of breathing technique as well as the centre of balance and gravity. Taoist and Buddhist teachers often instruct their students to centre the mind in the navel or lower dantian. This is believed to aid control of thoughts and emotions. Acting from the dantian is considered to be related to higher states of awareness including sanmei (三昧) or ding (定).

Historically the first detailed description of the lower Dantian is in the Laozi zhongjing from the 3rd century CE, which refers to the elixir-of-life field where "essence" and "spirit" are stored; it is related to regeneration and sexual energy, menstruation and semen.[8]

A master of Japanese acupuncture,[9] calligraphy, swordsmanship, tea ceremony, martial arts, among other arts, is held in the Japanese tradition to be "acting from the hara."

Lower dantian in Eastern body-mind therapies

The lower dantian in traditional Chinese Medicine is where the primordial essence, Jing (精), is stored. At the same time, the lower dantian is the place for Yuan qi (元氣), the Qi that has not yet been divided into Yin Qi or Yang Qi. This Qi is much less physical and could be seen as the elemental existence of atoms and electrons before there are molecules. In the Ancient Texts of the Book of the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi Neijing), the lower Dan Tian is referred to as both the seat of Jing (精) and the source of Yuan qi (元氣). Both can also be used side by side as an apparent contradiction. The lower dantian is the basis of all life—of the body (Jing 精), of the mind (shen, 神), of the energy of life (qi, 氣), of self-preservation, of self-healing capacity, of emotions with the basic fear / fear of life as a foundation.

In eastern medicine the Hara is seen as an area that reflects the state of all the organs (physically palpable in the abdomen or not), their energetic as well as their physical state, and their complex functional relationships with each other.[10] A number of Eastern therapies explicitly focus on the hara in their work, amongst them acupuncture, Anma, Ampuku,[11] Shiatsu[12] and QiGong.[13]

Japanese physicians and medical therapists use the abdomen (hara) in diagnosis to determine the health or otherwise of the patient, particularly, but not exclusively, the state of the abdominal organs or tissues and the related energy fields.[14]

In diagnosis and treatment, the hara is partitioned in areas, each of which is considered to represent one of the (ten, eleven or twelve) vital organs and their functional energy fields. The details of this basic model of Hara diagnosis may differ from school to school. [15][16]

A number of body-mind therapies have been introduced to or developed in the West, which seem to be influenced by concepts directly or indirectly derived from or related to Eastern models of abdominal diagnosis and therapy, some using breathing techniques (Buteyko, Yoga), postural alignment and movement education like Postural Integration, Feldenkrais, Alexander Technique, Qigong and Yoga, or manual manipulation like Osteopathy, Shiatsu and massage. All aim to relax, strengthen and support in their function the internal organs and tissues in, above and below the Hara.

Hara in the martial arts

The hara or lower dantian is important in the Chinese and Japanese martial arts,[17] which emphasise the importance of "moving from the hara",[18] i.e. moving from the centre of one's very being – body and mind. There are a large number of breathing exercises in traditional Japanese and Chinese martial arts where attention is always kept on the dantian or hara to strengthen the "Sea of Qi".

See also

Acupuncture

Dosha -vatta, pitta, Kapha (3 life elements in body)

Hara (tanden)

Jing (TCM)

Kiai

Kundalini energy

Meditation

Mindfulness (Buddhism)

Misogi

Pushing hands

Qigong

Scientific skepticism

Secret of the Golden Flower

Silk reeling

Tai chi

Triple burner

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How to Use a Feng Shui Bagua Map

The Bagua (八卦, "eight symbols") is a fundamental concept in Chinese philosophy, cosmology, and practices like Feng Shui and Baguazhang martial arts, representing the eight fundamental principles of reality through trigrams of solid (yang) and broken (yin) lines, used to map life aspects (wealth, family, career, etc.) onto spaces or analyze cosmic changes for balance and harmony.

In Feng Shui (Energy Mapping)

What it is: An octagonal or square grid applied to a floor plan to divide it into nine areas (including a center) representing life aspects like fame, relationships, and wealth.

How it works: Each area corresponds to specific colors, elements (wood, fire, earth, metal, water), and energies (yin/yang).

Purpose: To analyze and enhance the chi (energy) of a space by adjusting decor and objects in each section to support goals in that area of life.

In Taoist Cosmology & I Ching (Divination)

The Trigrams: Eight unique combinations of three lines (unbroken for yang, broken for yin) that represent natural forces (Heaven, Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, Thunder, Mountain, Lake).

The I Ching: Composed of 64 hexagrams, formed by combining two trigrams, used for divination and understanding change.

Arrangements: Two main sequences, the Early Heaven (primordial) and Later Heaven (manifested), show archetypal and cyclical orders, respectively.

In Martial Arts (Baguazhang)

Concept: A Chinese internal martial art (neijia) focused on circular walking and constant coiling/uncoiling movements.

Goal: To generate immense power by spiraling energy and adapting to an opponent's movements, integrating the principles of yin/yang and the Bagua's cyclical nature.

Key Takeaway

The Bagua is a versatile framework from ancient China that uses eight symbolic patterns (trigrams) to understand the interconnectedness of life, energy, and the universe, finding application in spatial design (Feng Shui), spiritual wisdom (I Ching), and physical discipline (martial arts).

Bagua - The Most Unique Martial Art in History?

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Wikipedia

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Bagua is a group of trigrams—composed of three lines, each either "broken" or "unbroken", which represent yin and yang, respectively.

Bagua from en.wikipedia.org

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The Bagua

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Feng Shui 101: An Introduction to the Bagua

Morris Feng Shui

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Combining Styles: Tai Chi and Bagua's Secret Connection

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Bagua and Tai Chi are compatible martial arts. They share similar principles, such as feeling opponents' force and using fascia techniques.

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And the two basic stretching exercises. Keep spiralling #bagua #baguazhang #kungfu
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Bagua from en.wikipedia.org

Yin-style baguazhang

Fu-style

Xingyiquan

Dong Haichuan

The Feng Shui Bagua - the basic feng shui map

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The Feng Shui bagua is one of the main tools used in Feng Shui to map a space or room in order to analyze the energy according to life areas.

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Bagua, Early Heaven Sequence, Later ...

Nations Online Project

<https://www.nationsonline.org> › Chinese_Customs › bagua

Bagua (Chinese: 八卦; pinyin: bā guà) literally: eight symbols, eight areas. The octagonal trigram template is a common symbol for the term Bagua. The template ...

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Bagua

Chinese name

Chinese 八卦

Literal meaning Eight trigrams

Transcriptions

Vietnamese name

Vietnamese alphabet Bát quái

Chữ Hán 八卦

Korean name

Hangul 팔괘

Hanja 八卦

Transcriptions

Japanese name

Kanji 八卦

Hiragana はっけ

Transcriptions

Bagua diagram explanation from Zhao Huiqian's 六書本義; Liùshū běnyì, 1370s

The bagua (Chinese: 八卦; pinyin: bāguà; lit. 'eight trigrams') is a set of symbols from China intended to illustrate the nature of reality as comprising mutually opposing forces reinforcing one another. Bagua is a group of trigrams—composed of three lines, each either "broken" or "unbroken", which represent yin and yang, respectively.[1] Each line having two possible states allows for a total of $2^3 = 8$ trigrams, whose early enumeration and characterization in China has had an effect on the history of Chinese philosophy and cosmology.

The trigrams are related to the divination practice as described within the I Ching and practiced as part of the Shang and Zhou state religion, as well as with the concepts of taiji and the five elements within traditional Chinese metaphysics.[citation needed] The trigrams have correspondences in astronomy, divination, meditation, astrology, geography, geomancy (feng shui), anatomy, decorative arts, the family, martial arts (particularly tai chi and baguazhang), Chinese medicine and elsewhere.[2][3]

The bagua can appear singly or in combination, and is commonly encountered in two different arrangements: the Primordial (先天八卦), "Earlier Heaven", [4] or "Fuxi" bagua (伏羲八卦), which is so named according the legend of Fuxi being the first primordial being to identify the eight trigrams; [5] and the Manifested (後天八卦), "Later Heaven", [4] or "King Wen" bagua, which arose recorded Chinese history.

In the I Ching, two trigrams are stacked together to create a six-line figure known as a hexagram. There are 64 possible permutations. The 64 hexagrams and their

descriptions make up the book. The trigram symbolism can be used to interpret the hexagram figure and text. An example from Hexagram 19 commentary is "The earth above the lake: The image of Approach. Thus the superior man is inexhaustible in his will to teach, and without limits in his tolerance and protection of the people." [6] The trigrams have been used to organize Yijing charts as seen below.

Trigrams

There are eight possible combinations to render the various trigrams:

Trigram figure	Possible binary value[7]	Possible decimal sequential number[7]	Name Translation: Wilhelm[8]	Image in nature (pp.I-II)	Phase Later
Heaven's Direction (p. 269)[citation needed]	Later Heaven's Equinox or Solstice[citation needed]	Earlier Heaven's Direction[citation needed]	Earlier Heaven's Equinox or Solstice[citation needed]	Family relationship (p. 274)	Body part (p. 274)
Attribute (p. 273)	Stage/ state (pp.I-II)	Animal (p. 273)	Obtained Images[9]		
1	☰	111 7	乾		
qián	the Creative, '(natural) force'	heaven, sky			
天	metal northwest	south Summer Solstice	father head strong,		
persisting	creative	馬			
horse	三連				
three lines					
2	☱	110 6	兌		
duì	the Joyous, 'open (reflection)'	lake, marsh			
澤	metal west	Fall Equinox southeast	third daughter	mouth	
	pleasure	tranquil (complete devotion)	羊		
sheep, goat	上缺				
flawed above					
3	☲	101 5	離		
lí	the Clinging, 'radiance'	fire, glow			
火	fire south	Summer Solstice east	Spring Equinox	second daughter	
	eye	light-giving, humane "dependence"	clinging, clarity, adaptable	雉	
pheasant	中虛				
hollow middle					
4	☳	100 4	震		
zhèn	the Arousing, 'shake'	thunder			
雷	wood east	Spring Equinox northeast	first son	foot	
	inciting movement	initiative	龍		
dragon	仰盂				
face-up jar					
5	☴	011 3	巽		
xùn	the Gentle, 'ground'	wind, air			
風	wood southeast	southwest	first daughter thigh	penetrating	
	gentle entrance	雞			
fowl	下斷				

broken below

6 ☵ 010 2 坎
kǎn the Abyssal, 'gorge' water
水 water north Winter Solstice west Fall Equinox second son ear
 dangerous in-motion 豕

pig 中滿

full middle

7 ☶ 001 1 艮
gèn Keeping Still, bound mountain
山 earth northeast northwest third son hand resting,
stand-still completion 狗

dog 覆碗

face-down bowl

8 ☷ 000 0 坤
kūn the Receptive, field ground, earth
地 earth southwest north Winter Solstice mother belly
 devoted, yielding receptive 牛

cow 六斷

six fragments

Alternative conversion of the trigrams to binary[10]

Relation to other principles

The Scripture of Changes 易經 (I Ching) listed two sources for the eight trigrams. Its chapter Xì Cí shàng; 'Great Treatise Beginning' explains the first source thus:[11][12]

Original text

易有太極，
是生兩儀，
兩儀生四象，
四象生八卦。

Transliteration

Yì yǒu tàijí,
shì shēng liǎngyí,
liǎngyí shēng sìxiàng,
sìxiàng shēng bāguà.

English translation

Having change is the great-axis,
The great-axis produces the paired forces,
The paired forces produce the four aspects,
the four aspects produce the eight ways.

Tài Jí (太極) Great Axis

Taiji is the encapsulation of all the universe, space and time.

It is derived from Wújí 無極 (without axis) the formless, dimensionless, limitless, unbounded, infinite void.

When the formless void began to stir and move, Taiji came into being.

Liǎng Yí (兩儀) Dual Powers

The beginning of the universe begot the twin forces:

-- yīn (trad. 陰 / simp. 阴) dark, original, central, passive

— yáng (trad. 陽 / simp. 阳) bright, extreme, furthest, active

Sì Xiàng (四像) Four Aspects

The twin powers produce four aspects named:

= great yang 太陽 tàiyáng

= lesser yang 少陽 shǎoyáng

= lesser yin 少陰 shǎoyīn

= great yin 太陰 tàiyīn

The four aspects are the differing levels of energy in world. Primarily they are associated with the solar terms, the two solstices and the two equinoxes. Being aspects they are also associated with the four main compass directions. Each direction is associated with a level of solar energy, and a mythological animal.

= great yang 太陽 tàiyáng, Summer Solstice (longest day), South (most sun), Red Bird

= lesser yang 少陽 shǎoyáng, Spring Equinox (increasing day), East (increasing sun), Blue Dragon

= lesser yin 少陰 shǎoyīn, Fall Equinox (increasing night), West (decreasing sun), White Tiger

= great yin 太陰 tàiyīn, Winter Solstice (longest night), North (least sun), Black Tortoise
Bā Guà (八卦) Eight Passages

Derivation of the bagua

The four phenomena act through the eight gates (bā guà):

☰ Heaven 乾; Qián, warming

☳ Thunder 震; Zhèn, storming

☵ Water 坎; Kǎn, pooling

☶ Mountain 艮; Gèn, jutting

☴ Wind 巽; Xùn, dispersing

☲ Fire 離; Lí, dancing

☱ Lake 兌; Duì, engulfing

☷ Earth 坤; Kūn, resting

Another chapter, 說卦; Shuō Guà; 'Discussing the Trigrams', characterizes the relationship of the trigrams as being:

乾; Qián ☰ Heaven, Father
坤; Kūn ☷ Earth, Mother
who have three sons:

震; Zhèn ☳ Thunder, 1st Son
坎; Kǎn, ☵ Water, 2nd Son
艮; Gèn ☶ Mountain, 3rd Son
and have three daughters:

巽; Xùn ☴ Wind, 1st Daughter
離; Lí ☲ Fire, 2nd Daughter
兌; Duì ☱ Lake, 3rd Daughter

The son trigrams all have a single — yáng line in their formation. The Yang trigrams correspond to odd numbers 1, 3, 5, 7.

The daughter trigrams all have a single -- yīn line in their formation. The Yin trigrams correspond to even numbers 0, 2, 4, 6.

Their ordering is from bottom line, mid line, top line.

Wǔxíng (五行) Five Phases

The trigrams are related to the five phases of the Wuxing. The phases are: Water, Wood, Fire, Earth and Metal.

The major qualities associated with the 5 phases are:

Water - Receding

Fire - Bursting

Earth - Resting

Wood - Growing

Metal - Contracting

These qualities are associated with the seasons.

Water is associated with mid winter, the time of lowest energy.

Fire is associated with mid summer, the time of highest energy.

Earth is the pivot or balanced energy, either given as late summer, or as a brief transitional period between the seasons, where they are neither obviously one quality or the next.

Wood is associated with the spring time, burst with life and increasing sunshine.

Metal with the fall, life is slowing down, the days are shortening, and both men and creatures are taking precaution by storing food, and preparing for winter.

Typically the trigram-to-phase correspondences are given as follows:

The phase of Water 水 only corresponds with the trigram of the Deep 坎; Kǎn.

The phase of Fire 火 only corresponds with the trigram of Flame 離; Lí.

The phase of Earth or Soil 土 corresponds with the trigrams of Earth 坤; Kūn and Mountain 艮; Gèn.

The phase of Wood 木 corresponds with the trigrams of Wind 巽; Xùn and Thunder 震; Zhèn.

The phase of Metal or Gold 金 corresponds with the trigrams of Heaven 乾; Qián and Lake 兌; Duì.[13]

Notably, more than just their seasonal correspondence, the elements have interactions with each other and relationships of promoting and subverting other elements, as well as reversals where there is insufficiency in one element, resulting in an unbalanced relationship giving unexpected results where it should normally promote or subvert another element, but gives the opposite effect.

The wuxing and its promoting/subverting relationship system is also used as a framework for understanding the relationships in spacial features in feng shui as well as the relationships between the organ systems in traditional Chinese medicine.

Liùshísì Guà (六十四卦) Sixty-Four Hexagrams

Eight trigrams stacked atop another eight trigrams give sixty-four variations of hexagrams, with the dominant quality above, and the secondary quality below. These sixty four hexagrams make up the main body of the Yijing oracle used for divination. The Yijing itself gives a pithy explanation for each hexagram.

The ways can be thought of as eight main expectations, and each variation is an outcome either typical, inverted; promoted, subverted; nurtured, neglected; surprised or disappointed; depending on circumstance. The sixty-four hexagrams give many possibility for how an endeavor may turn out.

Diviners consulting the Yijing oracle use a variety of methods to elicit a response from the oracle, such as throwing yarrow stalks, tossing coins, pulling cards from a deck, or consulting exterior signs, such as examining the shapes of sacrificed animal entrails, examining the cracking patterns of bones tossed into a fire, observing the flight path of startled birds, etc.

Hexagram lookup table

Upper

Lower

☰ ☰	☳ ☳	☲ ☲	☱ ☱	☵ ☵	☴ ☴	☶ ☶	☷ ☷
乾 qián	兌 duì	離 lí	震 zhèn	巽 xùn	坎 kǎn	艮 gèn	坤 kūn
Heaven	Lake	Flame	Thunder	Wind	Water	Mountain	Earth
☰ 1	43	14	34	5	26	11	
☰ ☰	☰ ☰	☰ ☰	☰ ☰	☰ ☰	☰ ☰		
乾 qián	乾 qián	夬 guài		大有 dà yǒu	大壯 dà zhuàng	小畜 xiǎo xù	
需 xū	大畜 dà xù	泰 tài					
Heaven	Force	Displacement		Great Possessing	Great Invigorating	Small	

Harvest	Attending	Great	Accumulating	Pervading				
☳ 10	☳ 58	☳ 38	☳ 54	☳ 61	☳ 60	☳ 41	☳ 19	
兌 duì	履 lǚ	兌 duì	睽 kuí	歸妹 guīmèi	中孚 zhōngfú	節 jié	損 sǔn	臨 lín
Lake	Treading	Open	Polarising	Converting the Maiden	Inner Truth			
	Articulating	Diminishing	Nearing					
☳ 13	☳ 49	☳ 30	☳ 55	☳ 37	☳ 63	☳ 22	☳ 36	
離 lí	同人 tóng rén	革 gé	離 lí	豐 fēng	家人 jiā rén	既濟 jì jì	賁 bì	明夷 míng yí
Flame	Concording People	Skinning	Radiance	Abounding	Dwelling People			
	Already Fording	Adorning	Intelligence Hidden					
☳ 25	☳ 17	☳ 21	☳ 51	☳ 42	☳ 3	☳ 27	☳ 24	
震 zhèn	无妄 wú wàng	隨 suí	噬嗑 shì hé	震 zhèn	益 yì	屯 tún	頤 yí	復 fù
Thunder	Innocence	Following	Gnawing Bite	Shake	Augmenting	Sprouting		
	Swallowing	Returning						
☳ 44	☳ 28	☳ 50	☳ 32	☳ 57	☳ 48	☳ 18	☳ 46	
巽 xùn	姤 gòu	大過 dà guò	鼎 dǐng	恆 héng	巽 xùn	井 jǐng	蠱 gǔ	升 shēng
Wind	Coupling	Great Exceeding	Holding	Persevering	Ground			
	Welling	Correcting	Ascending					
☳ 6	☳ 47	☳ 64	☳ 40	☳ 59	☳ 29	☳ 4	☳ 7	
坎 kǎn	訟 sòng	困 kùn	未濟 wèi jì	解 jiě	渙 huàn	坎 kǎn	蒙 méng	師 shī
Water	Arguing	Confining	Before Completion	Deliverance	Dispersing	Gorge		
	Enveloping	Leading						
☳ 33	☳ 31	☳ 56	☳ 62	☳ 53	☳ 39	☳ 52	☳ 15	
艮 gèn	遯 dùn	咸 xián	旅 lǚ	小過 xiǎo guò	漸 jiàn	蹇 jiǎn	艮 gèn	謙 qiān
Mountain	Retiring	Conjoining	Sojourning	Small Exceeding	Infiltrating			
	Limping	Bound	Humbling					
☳ 12	☳ 45	☳ 35	☳ 16	☳ 20	☳ 8	☳ 23	☳ 2	
坤 kūn	否 pǐ	萃 cuì	晉 jìn	豫 yù	觀 guàn	比 bǐ	剝 bāo	坤 kūn
Earth	Obstruction	Clustering	Prospering	Providing-For	Viewing	Grouping		
	Stripping	Field						

Fuxi's "Earlier Heaven" bagua arrangement

Name

卦名	Nature
自然	Season
季節	Personality
性情	Family

家族 Direction

方位 Meaning

意義

乾 Qián 天 Sky, Heaven Summer Creative 父 Father 南 South

健 Expansive energy, the sky. For further information, see tiān.

巽 Xùn 風 Wind Summer Gentle 長女 Eldest Daughter 西南 Southwest

入 Gentle penetration, flexibility.

坎 Kǎn 水 Water Autumn Deep 中男 Middle Son 西 West 陷 Danger, rapid rivers, the abyss, the moon.

艮 Gèn 山 Mountain Autumn Still 少男 Youngest Son 西北 Northwest

止 Stillness, immovability.

坤 Kūn 地 Earth Winter Receptive 母 Mother 北 North 順 Receptive energy, that which yields. For further information, see dì.

震 Zhèn 雷 Thunder Winter Arousing 長男 Eldest Son 東北 Northeast

動 Excitation, revolution, division.

離 Lí 火 Fire Spring Clinging 中女 Middle Daughter 東 East 麗 Rapid movement, radiance, the sun.

兌 Duì 澤 Lake Spring Joyous 少女 Youngest Daughter 東南 Southeast

悅 Joy, satisfaction, stagnation.

King Wen's "Later Heaven"

King Wen "Later Heaven" bagua arrangement

Name

卦名 Nature

自然 Season

季節 Personality

性情 Family

家族 Direction

方位 Meaning

意義

離 Li 火 Fire Summer Clinging 中女 Middle Daughter 南 South 麗

Pulsing motion, radiance, the luminaries.

坤 Kun 地 Earth Summer Receptive 母 Mother 西南 Southwest 順

Receptive energy, that which yields.

兌 Dui 澤 Lake Autumn Joyous 少女 Youngest Daughter 西 West

悅 Joy, satisfaction, stagnation.

乾 Qian 天 Heaven Autumn Creative 父 Father 西北 Northwest

健 Expansive energy, the sky.

坎 Kan 水 Water Winter Abyssal 中男 Middle Son 北 North 陷 Danger, rapid rivers, the abyss, the moon.

艮 Gen 山 Mountain Winter Still 少男 Youngest Son 東北 Northeast 止

Stillness, immovability.

震 Zhen 雷 Thunder Spring Arousing 長男 Eldest Son 東 East 動

Excitation, revolution, division.

巽 Xun 風 Wind Spring Gentle 長女 Eldest Daughter 東南 Southeast 入

Gentle penetration, flexibility.

In feng shui

The bagua is a tool in the majority of feng shui schools. The bagua used in feng shui can appear in two different versions: the Earlier Heaven bagua, used for burial sites, and the Later Heaven bagua, used for residences.

Pre-Natal Bagua

Primordial bagua is also known as Fuxi bagua or Earlier Heaven bagua. Named after the mythological first emperor of China. In the Preface of Shang Shu by Kong Anguo, he writes that "In ancient times, Fu Xi ruled the whole world. It was he who began to draw Eight Trigrams and to create Scripts in order to substitute the system of tying knots." [14] In traditional Chinese medicine, this sequence is known as the prenatal sequence and is used to understand familial risk for illness or disease, similar to western medicine's understanding of formative medicine and the study of genetics. The Heaven trigram is at the top, the Earth trigram is at the bottom (the South was located at the top in Chinese maps of this period) of the bagua. The Fire trigram is located on the left, while the Water trigram is on the right. Thunder and wind form another pair, being the opposites of each other; the first is on the bottom left next to fire, while the second is next to Heaven on the top right of the bagua. Mountain and Lake form the last pair, with one opposite to the other. The adjustment of the trigrams is symmetrical by forming exact contrary pairs. They symbolize the opposite forces of Yin and Yang and represent a state in which everything is in balance.

Post-Natal Bagua

The sequence of trigrams in the Later Heaven bagua is attributed to King Wen. It is also known as the postnatal bagua arrangement in traditional Chinese medicine; it is used to understand physical, emotional and environmental patterns that influence health or disease, similarly to western medicine's inquiry into functional medical science. [15] In this arrangement, Water is placed downwards and Fire at the top; Thunder is in the East, while Lake is in the West. Contrary to the Earlier Heaven bagua, the Later Heaven bagua is dynamic; energies and the aspects of each of its trigrams flow towards the following. It is the sequence used by the Luo Pan compass, which is used in feng shui and referred to as the manifest pattern; it analyzes the movement of the qi that practitioners believe affect them.

Western bagua

The popularity of feng shui increased in the West because of the bagua of the eight aspirations. Each trigram corresponds to an aspect of life that also corresponds to one of the cardinal directions. Applying feng shui using the bagua of the eight aspirations (or bagua map for short) made it possible to simplify feng shui and to use it for the general public. Western bagua focuses more heavily on intention than the traditional forms of feng shui. [16]

Experienced practitioners of traditional feng shui disregard Western bagua [17] for its simplicity, since it does not take into account the forms of the landscape, time, or the

annual cycles. The bagua of the eight aspirations is divided into two branches: the first, which uses the compass and cardinal directions, and the second, which uses the bagua by using the main door.

Bagua map

A bagua map is a tool used in Western forms of feng shui to map a room or location and see how the different sections correspond to different aspects in one's life. These sections are believed to relate to every area or aspect of life and are divided into categories such as fame, relationships/marriage, children/creativity, helpful people/travel, career, inner knowledge, family/ancestors/health, and wealth/blessings.

In this system, the map is intended to be used over the land, one's home, office or desk to find areas lacking good chi, and to show where there are spaces that may need rectifying or enhancing in life or the environment.

For example, if the bagua grid is placed over an entire house plan and it shows the toilet, bathroom, laundry, or kitchen in the wealth/blessings area of the map, it would be said that the money coming into that particular environment would disappear very fast.

A Tibetan "Mystic Tablet" containing the Eight Trigrams on top of a large tortoise (presumably, alluding to the animal that presented them to Fuxi), along with the 12 signs of Chinese zodiac, and a smaller tortoise carrying the Lo Shu Square on its shell
In Unicode

The bagua symbols in the Miscellaneous Symbols block of Unicode include the following:

Miscellaneous Symbols Unicode block

Official name	Glyph	Unicode #	HTML Element	
Trigram for Heaven	☰	U+2630	☰	Metal
Trigram for Lake	☱	U+2631	☱	
Trigram for Fire	☲	U+2632	☲	Fire
Trigram for Thunder	☳	U+2633	☳	Wood
Trigram for Wind	☴	U+2634	☴	
Trigram for Water	☵	U+2635	☵	Water
Trigram for Mountain	☶	U+2636	☶	Earth
Trigram for Earth	☷	U+2637	☷	

The Miscellaneous Symbols block also encodes the constituents — (yang—U+268A, ⚊) and -- (yin—U+268B, ⚋), as well as the digrams = (greater yang—U+268C, ⚌), == (lesser yin—U+268D, ⚍), = (lesser yang—U+268E, ⚎), and == (greater yin—U+268F, ⚏).

The hexagrams they form are separately encoded in the Yijing Hexagram Symbols Unicode block.

Modern usage

In traditional Chinese medicine, including the profession of acupuncture, the Earlier Heaven and Later Heaven arrangements are used to understand the pathogenesis of disease or illness and to select treatment plans specifically related and tailored to a patient's constitution.[18]

The Flag of South Korea has the four cardinal trigrams (qian, kun, kan, li) surrounding the taegeuk, or taijitu. These are specific representations of the movement and harmony of yin and yang. These trigrams were also depicted on the commissioning pennant of the South Korean Navy.

See also

Tian gan and Di zhi: the archaic calendar system of East Asia.

Baguazhen, a military tactical formation based on the bagua.

Ba Xian, Eight Taoist Immortals

Ba Mai

Ba Duan Jin

Chinese ritual mastery traditions

Chinese spiritual world concepts

Fuji (planchette writing)

Fulu

Octal

Note

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"Understanding Bagua sequence" (December 6, 2015) Shanghai Daily. Quote:

"According to the authentic rules of binary method, the value conversion is bottom-up.

The ID numbers of Mountain (☶, 100) and Thunder (☳, 001) should be reversed, [i.e. Mountain (☶)'s binary value should be 001 while Thunder (☳)'s binary value should be 100] [...] their sequential numbers are 0-Earth, 1-Mountain, 2-Water, 3-Wind, 4-Thunder, 5-Fire, 6-Valley, and 7-Sky."

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Zhouyi Jie. Explaining the Zhou's [Book of] Changes. "八卦取象歌" [Song about how the Eight Trigrams Obtained Their Images]. "☰乾三連，☷坤六斷，☳震仰盂，☶艮覆碗，☲離中虛，☵坎中滿，☱兌上缺，☴巽下斷。"

"Understanding Bagua sequence" (December 6, 2015) Shanghai Daily. Quote: "Leibniz came up with the ID number of each 3-yao gua's based on the position of yao from top down to base. He defined yang yao (whole line) as 1 and yin yao (broken line) as 0. Here are some examples according to Leibniz-Shao Yong approach. Mountain (☶) can be converted to 100. [...]"

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Seasonal Holidays 2025

Vesica Piscis / Flower of Life (Mystery schools) → Universal geometric seed patterns.

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The Vesica Piscis and Flower of Life are foundational patterns in Sacred Geometry, seen in mystery schools as universal blueprints for creation, representing divine unity, balance, and the unfolding of existence from a single source. The Vesica Piscis (two overlapping circles forming a lens/almond) is the genesis point, encoding fundamental math ($\sqrt{2}$, 3, 5) and birthing the Seed of Life, which then expands into the complex, interconnected Flower of Life, symbolizing the cosmos, consciousness, and the interconnectedness of all things.

Vesica Piscis: The Womb of Geometry

Formation: Two identical circles intersecting so each center lies on the other's circumference.

Meaning: Represents the union of opposites (divine masculine/feminine, heaven/earth), the womb, balance, and the "fish bladder" (Latin: vesica piscis).

Significance: Contains the blueprints for basic shapes (triangle, square, pentagon) and mathematical ratios, making it the "mother of geometry".

Seed of Life: First Steps of Creation

Formation: Six overlapping circles forming a six-petal flower within the Vesica Piscis.

Meaning: Represents the seven days of creation (Genesis), the formation of the Trinity, and the initial cosmic blueprint.

Flower of Life: The Universal Matrix

Formation: A complex, repeating hexagonal pattern of overlapping circles, built from the Seed of Life.

Meaning: Symbolizes the interconnectedness of all life, the universe's blueprint, evolution of consciousness, and the divine creator.

Applications: Used by mystics, artists (like Leonardo da Vinci), and in various spiritual traditions to understand cosmic order.

Mystery School Connection

These patterns are seen as keys to understanding the universe's underlying structure, used to teach spiritual truths about unity, vibration, and the manifestation of form from spirit, linking ancient wisdom to universal laws.

The Seed of Life, Vesica Piscis, and the Merkaba

May 16, 2015 — (Image Source: Adaptation of a public domain image, Wikimedia Commons.) The Seed of Life has six different vesica pisc...

Enter The Earth

The Vesica Piscis is one of the most powerful sacred geometry ...

Dec 31, 2024 — Two symbols function as seeds from which all geometric figures sprout: known by the names, vesica piscis and mandorla.

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Mar 27, 2023 — Geometric and Mathematical Exploration. Formation of the Vesica Piscis: The vesica piscis emerges from the intersectio...

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The Seed of Life, Vesica Piscis, and the Merkaba

Enter The Earth

<https://www.entertheearth.com> › Sacred Geometry

May 17, 2015 — The “Seed of Life” is a contemporary name for an ancient geometric figure. It consists of seven overlapping circles with the same diameter.

Vesica Piscis There is a structure in sacred geometry ...

Facebook · Sacred Geometry

40+ comments · 3 months ago

There is a structure in sacred geometry. It is formed when the centers of two circles of equal radii are located on each other's circumferences.

Top answer:

The eternal portal

The Flower of Life: Sacred Geometry and Harmonic ...

May 8, 2025

Vesica piscis symbol in sacred geometry - Facebook

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<https://jain108.com> › vesica-pisces-the-mother-of-all-fo...

Aug 21, 2017 — Observe the oval geometry in the middle, known as the Vesica Piscis (or Vessel of the Fish) which resembles an almond shape or the shape of the ...

Vesica Piscis

Pardesco

<https://pardesco.com> › blogs › news › vesica-piscis

Mar 28, 2023 — The vesica piscis emerges from the intersection of two equal circles such that each circle's center lies on the circumference of the other. ...
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These polygons are and I'll show you how to draw them starting with the Flower of Life and the Vesica Piscis. Flower of Life grid 01:13 ...

9 key moments in this video

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The Vesica Piscis symbol is comprised of two overlapping circles that form an almond shape in the center, also called a “mandorla.”

The Flower Of Life - An Introduction To Sacred Geometry

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Dec 21, 2022 — The Vesica Piscis is where two circles of equal diameter intersect, forming a lens. This sacred geometric shape has inspired and captivated ...

The Sacred Geometry of Creation: Vesica Piscis : r/FindLaura

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It's a brief exploration of another shape and concept that appears in Twin Peaks, abstracted in a number of ways from the very first episode ...

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The Flower of Life and the Secrets it holds to Life | INCENTRE

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AI Overview

What You Need To Know About Three Dantian Qi - Onenergy

A Dantian (or Qi|Qigong energy center) is a vital energy hub in traditional Chinese medicine and practices like Qigong, Tai Chi, and Taoist alchemy, often called the "elixir field," where life force (Qi) is stored, refined, and circulated, with the Lower Dantian (below the navel) being crucial for grounding, vitality, and core strength, while Middle Dantian (chest) governs emotions, and the Upper Dantian (forehead/third eye) relates to spirit/consciousness.

Key Concepts

Meaning: "Dan" (丹) means elixir or cinnabar, and "Tian" (田) means field, symbolizing a place to create spiritual or physical vitality.

Function: Dantians are centers for cultivating and storing Qi (life energy) for health, longevity, and spiritual development, akin to Indian chakras.

Dantian Breathing: A deep, diaphragmatic breath that expands the lower abdomen, activating the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation, and strengthening core muscles, unlike shallow chest breathing.

The Three Dantians

Lower Dantian (Xià Dāntián):

Location: Lower abdomen, 2-3 inches below the navel.

Focus: Grounding, physical stability, reproduction, vitality (Jing), and the base for martial arts power.

Middle Dantian (Zhōng Dāntián):

Location: Center of the chest, heart level.

Focus: Emotions, respiration, blood circulation, compassion (Qi).

Upper Dantian (Shàng Dāntián):

Location: Forehead, between the eyebrows (third eye area).

Focus: Spirit, consciousness, mental clarity (Shen).

Practice & Importance

Martial Arts: Focus on the lower dantian provides powerful, grounded, and efficient movement.

Meditation/Qigong: Cultivating the dantian through breath and focus refines energy, fostering physical health and spiritual growth.

Health Benefits: Promotes deep relaxation, increased oxygen intake, better energy, and mental calm.

Three Dantian Meditation

Three Dan Tian meditation uses breath and concentration to activate the circulation of qi and blood through three areas of the bod...

Taoist Sanctuary of San Diego

The Dantian And The Taoist Internal Alchemy

Conclusion. The concept of dāntián comes essentially from Taoist internal alchemy, and it is in this discipline that it acquires i...

gwongzaukungfu.com

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<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dantian>

Dantian (Ch. in traditional Chinese medicine is a center of qi, the vital life force. The dantian are important focal points in traditional Chinese medicine, ...

Etymology

Three dantians and the elixir...

The lower dantian or hara

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Healthline

<https://www.healthline.com/health/dantian>

Dec 28, 2020 — Dantian, or dan tian, translates from Chinese to mean “field of elixir.” It describes what's believed by some to be the seat of life force energy in the body.

What are dantian?

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[Qi Gong Q&A #1] What Is Dantian

YouTube · Dr. Alex Hui

Mar 28, 2021

YouTube · Dr. Alex Hui

4:10

Dantian is the energy center of the human body, located 1/3 of the distance from the belly button to the spine.

Dan Tian Breathing with Dr Paul Lam | New FREE Tai Chi for ...
YouTube · Dr Paul Lam - Tai Chi Productions
Jun 30, 2023
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Dantian breathing: Breathe in, expand the belly, and breathe out, contract the pelvic floor. It enhances relaxation, healing power, and strengthens the spine.
Dantian, the Source of Internal Strength Explained.
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Taoist Sanctuary of San Diego
<https://www.taoistsanctuary.org> › three-dantian-meditation
The Three Dan Tian meditation uses breath and concentration to activate the circulation of qi and blood through these areas.
Dantian - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics

ScienceDirect.com
<https://www.sciencedirect.com> › topics › dantian
The lower dantian 'is the body's center of gravity as well as the energy center. The dantian stores qi and drives it throughout the body.
The wonders of the dantian

Peter Deadman
<https://peterdeadman.com> › blogs › peter-deadman › th...
Mar 6, 2024 — The lower dantian – 'field of elixir' or 'cinnabar field' – is considered a vital energetic store, as well as the centre of gravity in the body.
What is the dantian? Why is lower dantian breathing ...

Dantian Health
<https://dantianhealth.com.au> › ... › Chinese Medicine
The dantian, often translated as elixir or cinnabar field, is a core energy centre of our body. A dantian is different from a chakra as it is a storehouse of ...
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National Institutes of Health (NIH) | (.gov)

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2957109>

by AS Chan · 2010 · Cited by 71 — The Shaolin Dan Tian Breathing is a way to stimulate the Dan Tian region and to enhance the blood and Qi circulation. This technique consists of two components— ...

Where in the World is Dantian?

Flowing Zen

<https://flowingzen.com/where-in-the-world-is-dantian>

Oct 2, 2012 — It is located in your lower belly, and it is the natural center for your body's energy. Dantian is important not only for energy arts like qigong, but also for ...

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Three Dantian: Qigong Energy Centers - Part 1 | YMAA

What Are Dantian? The Energy Centers of Chinese Medicine

Dantian in traditional Chinese medicine is a center of qi, the vital life force. Three main dantian are typically emphasized: the lower dantian, situated at the lower belly, called hara in Japanese; the middle dantian, at the level of the heart; and the upper dantian, at the forehead between the eyebrows or third eye.

Source:

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Chinese: 丹田

Literal meaning: elixir-of-life field

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Definitions from Oxford Languages · Learn more

man·tra

/ˈmantrə/

noun

1.

(originally in Hinduism and Buddhism) a word or sound repeated to aid concentration in meditation.

"a mantra is given to a trainee meditator when his teacher initiates him"

2.

a statement or slogan repeated frequently.

"the environmental mantra that energy has for too long been too cheap"

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a sacred utterance, a numinous sound, a syllable, word or phonemes, or group of words (most often in an Indo-Iranian language like Sanskrit or Avestan)

Mantra (disambiguation)

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The meaning of MANTRA is a mystical formula of invocation or incantation (as in Hinduism). How to use mantra in a sentence.

Mantra | Meditation, Chanting, Hinduism, & Buddhism

Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/.../Spirituality>

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The universe speaks to you in subtle ways, and today it has chosen a mantra just for you. On the screen, multiple mantras appear, but when you tap, one will reveal itself — that is your mantra for the day. It carries the vibration you most need right now, aligned with your energy and current life path. Chant this mantra during meditation, slowly and with full attention. Let it awaken the inner currents, dissolve mental blocks, and connect you with the higher forces guiding your journey. Even a few minutes of focus will amplify clarity, calm, and subtle protection around you. This simple act of listening to the universe and following its guidance strengthens your inner alignment. Receive your mantra, honor it, and let it flow through your mind, heart, and actions today. [Mantra, Energy, Alignment, Vibration, Meditation, Clarity, Calm, Guidance, Intuition, Protection, Focus, Awakening, Harmony, Insight, Healing]

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In an age clouded by confusion and material darkness, the Supreme Lord, out of His boundless compassion, offers us the brightest beacon of hope — the Hare Krishna Mahā-mantra. This divine sound vibration is not merely a chant; it is the Supreme Light that purifies the heart, awakens devotion, and gently guides wandering souls back to their eternal home. To receive this mantra is to receive the Lord's greatest mercy, a reminder that even in the most challenging times, His love is only a chant away.
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Reviews

Mantra - Definition, Meaning & Synonyms

Vocabulary.com

<https://www.vocabulary.com> › dictionary › mantra

A mantra is a motivating chant, like the “I think I can, I think I can” you repeat over and over to yourself on the last stretch of every marathon you run.

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"Mantr" and "Om Shanti" redirect here. For the 2010 film, see [Om Shanti \(film\)](#). For other uses, see [Mantra \(disambiguation\)](#).

Om

[Ṇamōkāra mantra](#)

[Om mani padme hum](#)

[Kalacakra E-VAM mantra](#), the [Tenfold Powerful One mantra](#)

[Hare Krishna mantra](#)

Clockwise from upper left: Om (an ancient Vedic mantra used in Hinduism and Buddhism); the [Ṇamōkāra mantra](#) (the most important mantra in Jainism); the [Vajrayana Buddhist E-VAM mantra](#), known as the [Kalachakra "Tenfold Powerful One"](#); the [Hare Krishna mantra](#) in a modern concert setting; [Om mani padme hum](#) (a popular Buddhist mantra) in [Tianjin Temple](#) ([Ranjana script](#)).

A mantra (/ˈmæntrə, ˈmʌn-/ MAN-trə, MUN-;^[1] Pali: mantra) or mantram (Devanagari: मन्त्रम्^[2]) is a sacred utterance, a numinous sound, a syllable, word or phonemes, or group of words (most often in an Indo-Iranian language like Sanskrit or Avestan) believed by practitioners to have religious, magical or spiritual powers.^[3]^[4] Some mantras have a syntactic structure and a literal meaning, while others do not.^[3]^[5]

ॐ, ॐ (Aum, Om) serves as an important mantra in various Indian religions. Specifically, it is an example of a seed syllable mantra ([bijamantra](#)). It is believed to be the first sound in Hinduism and as the sonic essence of the absolute divine reality. Longer mantras are phrases with several syllables, names and words. These phrases may have spiritual interpretations such as a name of a deity, a longing for truth, reality, light, immortality, peace, love, knowledge, and action.^[3]^[6] Examples of longer mantras include the [Gayatri Mantra](#), the [Hare Krishna mantra](#), [Om Namah Shivaya](#), the [Mani mantra](#), the [Mantra of Light](#), the [Namokar Mantra](#), and the [Mūl Mantar](#). Mantras without any actual linguistic meaning are still considered to be musically uplifting and spiritually meaningful.^[7]

The use, structure, function, importance, and types of mantras vary according to the school and philosophy of Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Sikhism.^[4]^[8] A common practice is [japa](#), the meditative repetition of a mantra, usually with the aid of a [mala](#) (prayer beads). Mantras serve a central role in the Indian tantric traditions, which developed elaborate yogic methods which make use of mantras.^[7]^[9] In tantric religions (often called "mantra paths", Sanskrit: [Mantranāya](#) or [Mantramarga](#)), mantric methods are considered to be the most effective path. Ritual initiation ([abhiseka](#)) into a specific mantra and its associated deity is often a requirement for reciting certain mantras in these traditions. However, in some religious traditions, initiation is not always required for certain mantras, which are open to all.^[10]^[6]

The word mantra is also used in English to refer to something that is said frequently and is deliberately repeated over and over.

Etymology and origins

The earliest mention of mantras is found in the Vedas of ancient India and the Avesta of ancient Iran.[11] Both Sanskrit *mántra* and the equivalent Avestan *maθra* go back to the common Proto-Indo-Iranian **mantram*, consisting of the Indo-European **men* "to think" and the instrumental suffix **trom*. [12][13][14][15][16] Due to the linguistic and functional similarities, they must go back to the common Indo-Iranian period, commonly dated to around 2000 BCE. [17][18]

Scholars [3][7] consider the use of mantras to have begun in India before 1000 BC. By the middle Vedic period (1000 BC to 500 BC) – claims Frits Staal – mantras in Hinduism had developed into a blend of art and science. [7]

The Chinese translation is 真言; *zhenyan*; 'true words', the Japanese *on'yomi* reading of the Chinese being *shingon* (which is also used as the proper name for the Shingon sect). According to Alex Wayman and Ryujun Tajima, "Zhenyan" (or "Shingon") means "true speech", has the sense of "an exact mantra which reveals the truth of the dharmas", and is the path of mantras. [19][20]

According to Bernfried Schlerath, the concept of *sātyas* mantras is found in Indo-Iranian Yasna 31.6 and the Rigveda, where it is considered structured thought in conformity with the reality or poetic (religious) formulas associated with inherent fulfillment. [21]

Definition

Mantras written on a rock near Namche Bazaar Nepal

There is no generally accepted definition of mantra. [22] As a result, there is a long history of scholarly disagreement on the meaning of mantras and whether they are instruments of mind, as implied by the etymological origin of the word mantra. One school suggests mantras are mostly meaningless sound constructs, while the other holds them to be mostly meaningful linguistic instruments of mind. [6] Both schools agree that mantras have melody and a well designed mathematical precision in their construction and that their influence on the reciter and listener is similar to that is observed in people around the world listening to their beloved music that is devoid of words. [3][7]

In Oxford Living Dictionary mantra is defined as a word or sound repeated to aid concentration in meditation. [23] Cambridge Dictionary provides two different definitions. The first refers to Hinduism and Buddhism: a word or sound that is believed to have a special spiritual power. The second definition is more general: a word or phrase that is often repeated and expresses a particularly strong belief. For instance, a football team can choose individual words as their own "mantra." [24]

Louis Renou has defined mantra as a thought.[25] Mantras are structured formulae of thoughts, claims Silburn.[26] Farquhar concludes that mantras are a religious thought, prayer, sacred utterance, but also believed to be a spell or weapon of supernatural power.[27] Zimmer defines mantra as a verbal instrument to produce something in one's mind.[28] Agehananda Bharati defines mantra, in the context of the Tantric school of Hinduism, to be a combination of mixed genuine and quasi-morphemes arranged in conventional patterns, based on codified esoteric traditions, passed on from a guru to a disciple through prescribed initiation.[29]

Jan Gonda, a widely cited scholar on Indian mantras,[30] defines mantra as general name for the verses, formulas or sequence of words in prose which contain praise, are believed to have religious, magical or spiritual efficiency, which are meditated upon, recited, muttered or sung in a ritual, and which are collected in the methodically arranged ancient texts of Hinduism.[31] By comparing the Old Indic Vedic and Old Iranian Avestan traditions, Gonda concludes that in the oldest texts, mantras were "means of creating, conveying, concentrating and realizing intentional and efficient thought, and of coming into touch or identifying oneself with the essence of the divinity".[3] In some later schools of Hinduism, Gonda suggests a mantra is sakti (power) to the devotee in the form of formulated and expressed thought.[3]

A Mantra Chant

Duration: 6 minutes and 20 seconds.6:20

A Buddhist mantra chant set to Indian classical music (6 minutes 19 seconds)[32]

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Frits Staal clarifies that mantras are not rituals, they are what is recited or chanted during a ritual.[7] Staal[7] presents a non-linguistic view of mantras. He suggests that verse mantras are metered and harmonized to mathematical precision (for example, in the viharanam technique), which resonate, but a lot of them are a hodgepodge of meaningless constructs such as are found in folk music around the world. Staal cautions that there are many mantras that can be translated and do have spiritual meaning and philosophical themes central to Hinduism, but that does not mean all mantras have a literal meaning. He further notes that even when mantras do not have a literal meaning, they do set a tone and ambiance in the ritual as they are recited, and thus have a straightforward and uncontroversial ritualistic meaning.[7] The sounds may lack literal meaning, but they can have an effect. He compares mantras to bird songs, that have the power to communicate, yet do not have a literal meaning.[33] On that saman category of Hindu mantras, which Staal described as resembling the arias of Bach's oratorios and other European classics, he notes that these mantras have musical structure, but they almost always are completely different from anything in the syntax of natural languages. Mantras are literally meaningless, yet musically meaningful to Staal.[34] The saman chant mantras were transmitted from one Hindu generation to next verbally for over 1000 years but never written, a feat, suggests Staal, that was made possible by the strict mathematical principles used in constructing the mantras. These saman chant mantras

are also mostly meaningless, cannot be literally translated as Sanskrit or any Indian language, but nevertheless are beautiful in their resonant themes, variations, inversions, and distribution.[7] They draw the devotee in. Staal is not the first person to view Hindu mantras in this manner. The ancient Hindu Vedic ritualist Kautsa was one of the earliest scholars to note that mantras are meaningless; their function is phonetic and syntactic, not semantic.[35]

Harvey Alper[36] and others[37] present mantras from the linguistic point view. They admit Staal's observation that many mantras do contain bits and pieces of meaningless jargon, but they question what language or text doesn't. The presence of an abracadabra bit does not necessarily imply the entire work is meaningless. Alper lists numerous mantras that have philosophical themes, moral principles, a call to virtuous life, and even mundane petitions. He suggests that from a set of millions of mantras, the devotee chooses some mantras voluntarily, thus expressing that speaker's intention, and the audience for that mantra is that speaker's chosen spiritual entity. Mantras deploy the language of spiritual expression, they are religious instruments, and that is what matters to the devotee. A mantra creates a feeling in the practicing person. It has an emotive numinous effect, it mesmerizes, it defies expression, and it creates sensations that are by definition private and at the heart of all religions and spiritual phenomena.[3][29][38]

Hinduism

See also: Category:Hindu mantras

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vte

History

During the early Vedic period, Vedic poets became fascinated by the inspirational power of poems, metered verses, and music. They referred to them with the root dhi-, which evolved into the dhyana (meditation) of Hinduism, and the language used to start and assist this process manifested as a mantra.[7] By the middle vedic period (1000 BC to 500 BC), mantras were derived from all vedic compositions. They included ṛc (verses

from Rigveda for example), sāman (musical chants from the Sāmaveda for example), yajus (a muttered formula from the yajurveda for example), and nigada (a loudly spoken yajus). During the Hindu Epics period and after, mantras multiplied in many ways and diversified to meet the needs and passions of various schools of Hinduism.[39] In the Linga Purana, Mantra is listed as one of the 1,008 names of Lord Shiva.[40]

Numerous ancient mantras are found in the Saṃhitā portion of the Vedas. The Saṃhitās are the most ancient layer of the Vedas, and contain numerous mantras, hymns, prayers, and litanies.[41] The Rigveda Samhita contains about 10552 Mantras, classified into ten books called Mandalas. A Sukta is a group of Mantras.[42] Mantras come in many forms, including ṛc (verses from the Rigveda for example) and sāman (musical chants from the Sāmaveda for example).[3][7]

In Hindu tradition, Vedas are sacred scriptures which were revealed (and not composed) by the seers (Rishis). According to the ancient commentator and linguist, Yaska, these ancient sacred revelations were then passed down through an oral tradition and are considered to be the foundation for the Hindu tradition.[42]

Mantras took a center stage in Tantric traditions,[39] which made extensive ritual and meditative use of mantras, and posited that each mantra is a deity in sonic form.[9]

Function and structure

One function of mantras is to solemnize and ratify rituals.[43] Each mantra, in Vedic rituals, is coupled with an act. According to Apastamba Srauta Sutra, each ritual act is accompanied by one mantra, unless the Sutra explicitly marks that one act corresponds to several mantras. According to Gonda,[44] and others,[45] there is a connection and rationale between a Vedic mantra and each Vedic ritual act that accompanies it. In these cases, the function of mantras was to be an instrument of ritual efficacy for the priest, and a tool of instruction for a ritual act for others.

Over time, as the Puranas and Epics were composed, the concepts of worship, virtues and spirituality evolved in Hinduism and new schools of Hinduism were founded, each continuing to develop and refine its own mantras. In Hinduism, suggests Alper,[46] the function of mantras shifted from the quotidian to redemptive. In other words,[47] in Vedic times, mantras were recited a practical, quotidian goal as intention, such as requesting a deity's help in the discovery of lost cattle, cure of illness, succeeding in competitive sport or journey away from home. The literal translation of Vedic mantras suggests that the function of mantra, in these cases, was to cope with the uncertainties and dilemmas of daily life. In a later period of Hinduism,[48] mantras were recited with a transcendental redemptive goal as intention, such as escape from the cycle of life and rebirth, forgiveness for bad karma, and experiencing a spiritual connection with the god. The function of mantras, in these cases, was to cope with the human condition as a whole. According to Alper,[6] redemptive spiritual mantras opened the door for mantras where every part need not have a literal meaning, but together their resonance and musical quality assisted the transcendental spiritual process. Overall, explains Alper, using

Śivasūtra mantras as an example, Hindu mantras have philosophical themes and are metaphorical with social dimension and meaning; in other words, they are a spiritual language and instrument of thought.[48]

According to Staal,[7] Hindu mantras may be spoken aloud, anirukta (not enunciated), upamsu (inaudible), or manasa (not spoken, but recited in the mind). In ritual use, mantras are often silent instruments of meditation.

Invocation

For almost every mantra, there are six limbs called Shadanga.[49] These six limbs are: Seer (Rishi), Deity (Devata), Seed (Beeja), Energy (Shakti), Poetic Meter (chanda), and Lock (Kilaka).

Methods

Hare Krishna devotees in Amsterdam carrying a poster with the Hare Krishna Mantra
The most basic mantra is Om, which in Hinduism is known as the "pranava mantra," the source of all mantras. The Hindu philosophy behind this is the premise that before existence and beyond existence is only One reality, Brahman, and the first manifestation of Brahman expressed as Om. For this reason, Om is considered as a foundational idea and reminder, and thus is prefixed and suffixed to all Hindu prayers. While some mantras may invoke individual gods or principles, fundamental mantras such as Shanti Mantra, the Gayatri Mantra and others ultimately focus on the One reality.

Japa

Main article: Japa

Mantra japa is a practice of repetitively uttering the same mantra[50] for an auspicious number of times, the most popular being 108, and sometimes just 5, 10, 28 or 1008.[3] [51] Japa is found in personal prayer or meditative efforts of some Hindus, as well during formal puja (group prayers). Japa is assisted by malas (bead necklaces) containing 108 beads and a head bead (sometimes referred to as the 'meru', or 'guru' bead); the devotee using their fingers to count each bead as they repeat the chosen mantra. Having reached 108 repetitions, if they wish to continue another cycle of mantras, the devotee turns the mala around without crossing the head bead and repeats the cycle.[52] Japa-yajna is claimed to be most effective if the mantra is repeated silently in mind (manasah).[51]

According to this school, any shloka from holy Hindu texts like the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Yoga Sutra, even the Mahabharata, Ramayana, Durga saptashati or Chandi is a mantra, thus can be part of the japa, repeated to achieve a numinous effect. [53][54][55] The Dharmasāstra claims that the Gāyatri mantra, derived from Rig Veda verse 3.62.10, and the Puruṣasūkta mantra, from Rig Veda verse 10.90, are the most auspicious mantras for japa at sunrise and sunset; it is claimed to purify the mind and spirit.[3]

Kirtan (chanting)

Kirtan is a more musical form of mantric practice. It is a common method in the bhakti traditions, such as Gaudiya Vaishnavism.[56] Kirtan includes call and response forms of chanting accompanied by various Indian instruments (such as the tabla, mrdanga and harmonium), and it may also include dancing and theatrical performance.[57][58][59] Kirtan is also common in Sikhism.

Tantric

Tantric Hindu traditions see the universe as sound.[60] The supreme (para) brings forth existence through the Word (shabda). Creation consists of vibrations at various frequencies and amplitudes giving rise to the phenomena of the world.

Buhnemann notes that deity mantras are an essential part of Tantric compendia. The tantric mantras vary in their structure and length. Mala mantras are those mantras which have an enormous number of syllables. In contrast, bija mantras are one-syllabled, typically ending in anusvara (a simple nasal sound). These are derived from the name of a deity; for example, Durga yields dum and Ganesha yields gam. Bija mantras are prefixed and appended to other mantras, thereby creating complex mantras. In the tantric school, these mantras are believed to have supernatural powers, and they are transmitted by a preceptor to a disciple in an initiation ritual.[61] Tantric mantras found a significant audience and adaptations in medieval India, Southeast Asia and numerous other Asian countries with Buddhism.[62]

Majumdar and other scholars[3][63] suggest mantras are central to the Tantric school, with numerous functions. From initiating and emancipating a tantric devotee to worshiping manifested forms of the divine. From enabling heightened sexual energy in the male and the female to acquiring supernormal psychological and spiritual power. From preventing evil influences to exorcizing demons, and many others.[64] These claimed functions and other aspects of the tantric mantra are a subject of controversy among scholars.[65]

Tantra usage is not unique to Hinduism: it is also found in Buddhism both inside and outside India.[66]

Examples

A personification of the Gayatri Mantra

Gayatri

Main article: Gayatri Mantra

The Gayatri mantra is considered one of the most universal of all Hindu mantras, invoking the universal Brahman as the principle of knowledge and the illumination of the primordial Sun. The mantra is extracted from the 10th verse of Hymn 62 in Book III of the Rig Veda.[67]

ॐ भूर्भुवस्वः । तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम् । भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि । धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्

Om̐ bhūr bhuvaḥ svaḥ tat savitur vareṇyaṃ bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ
pracodayāt,[68]

"Let us meditate on that excellent glory of the divine Light (Vivifier, Sun). May he stimulate our understandings (knowledge, intellectual illumination)."[67]

Pavamana

Main article: Pavamana Mantra

असतो मा सद्गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्मांमृतं गमय ॥ asato mā sad-gamaya, tamaso mā
jyotir-gamaya, mṛtyor-māmṛtaṃgamaya.

(Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.3.28)[69]

"from the unreal lead me to the real, from the dark lead me to the light, from death lead me to immortality."

Shanti

Main article: Shanti Mantra

Om̐ Sahanā vavatu sahanau bhunaktu saha vīryam karavāvai tejasvi nāvadhītamastu
Mā vidviṣāvai

Om̐ Shāntiḥ, Shāntiḥ, Shāntiḥ.

"Om! Let the Studies that we together undertake be effulgent;

Let there be no Animosity amongst us;

Om! Peace, Peace, Peace."

– Taittiriya Upanishad 2.2.2

Other

Other important Hindu mantras include:

Mahāmṛtyujaya-mantra (Great Death Defeating Mantra) - A popular Rigvedic mantra dedicated to Rudra

Om̐ Namah Shivaya - one of the main mantras in Shaivism

Om̐ kālabhairavāya namaḥ - a key mantra of Bhairava, the fierce form of Shiva

Om̐ Namo Narayanaya - the principal mantra of Vishnu in Vaishnavism[70]

Hare Krishna Maha Mantra - the most important mantra in the Vaishnava Bhakti tradition of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Om̐ aim mahāsarasvatyai namaḥ - a mantra of Saraswati

Om̐ Śrīm̐ Mahālakṣmyai Namaha - a Lakshmi mantra

Om̐ Krim Kali - a Kali seed (bija) mantra

Om̐ Śrī Durgāya Namaḥ - one of the principal mantras in Shaktism and Shaivism dedicated to Durga

Ka E I La Hrim Ha Sa Ka La Ha Hrim Sa Ka La Hrim - the Panchadasi, the main mantra of Lalita in Srividya

Om̐ Śrī Gaṇeśāya Namaḥ - a key mantra of Ganesha

Om̐ Śrī Hanumate Namaḥ - the root mantra of Hanuman

Om hrim ksaumugram viram mahavivnumjvalantam sarvatomukham Nrsimham
bhisanam bhadrammrtyormrtyum namamyaham - Narasimha mahamantra

Om̐ Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya - the key mantra in Bhagavatism

Om̐ Aim Hreem Kleem Chamundayai Vichche - a mantra of the goddess Chamunda

Oṃ Shree Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram - a mantra of Rama

Oṃ āim hrīm śrīm klīm - a mantra of the goddess in Shaktism

The various mantras associated with the yogic Sūryanamaskāra (Sun Salutation) practice

The various versions of the Gayatri

So 'haṃ (I am He or I am That)

In the Shiva Sutras

Apart from Shiva Sutras, which originated from Shiva's tandava dance, the Shiva Sutras of Vasugupta[71] are a collection of seventy-seven aphorisms that form the foundation of the tradition of spiritual mysticism known as Kashmir Shaivism. They are attributed to the sage Vasugupta of the 9th century C.E. Sambhavopaya (1–1 to 1–22), Saktopaya (2–1 to 2–10) and Anavopaya (3–1 to 3–45) are the main sub-divisions, three means of achieving God consciousness, of which the main technique of Saktopaya is a mantra. But "mantra" in this context does not mean incantation or muttering of some sacred formula. The word "mantra" is used here in its etymological signification.[72] That which saves one by pondering over the light of Supreme I-consciousness is a mantra. The divine Supreme I-consciousness is the dynamo of all the mantras. Deha or body has been compared to wood, "mantra" has been compared to arani—a piece of wood used for kindling fire by friction; prana has been compared to fire. Sikha or flame has been compared to atma (Self); ambara or sky has been compared to Shiva. When prana is kindled by means of mantra used as arani, fire in the form of udana arises in susumna, and then just as flame arises out of kindled fire and gets dissolved in the sky, so also atma (Self) like a flame having burnt down the fuel of the body, gets absorbed in Shiva. [73]

Buddhism

Votive plaque with Ye Dharma Hetu at the bottom.

In Early Buddhism

One of the most ancient Buddhist mantras is the famous Pratītyasamutpāda-gāthā, also known as the dependent origination dhāraṇī. This phrase is said to encapsulate the meaning of the Buddha's Teaching. It was a popular Buddhist verse and was used as a mantra.[74] This mantra is found inscribed on numerous ancient Buddhist statues, chaityas, and images.[75][76]

The Sanskrit version of this mantra is:

ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgato hyavadat, teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha evaṃvādī mahāśramaṇaḥ

The phrase can be translated as follows:

Of those phenomena which arise from causes: Those causes have been taught by the Tathāgata (Buddha), and their cessation too - thus proclaims the Great Ascetic.

Early Buddhist texts also contain various apotropaic chants which have similar functions to Vedic mantras. These are called parittas in Pali (Sanskrit: paritrana) and mean "protection, safeguard". They are still chanted in Theravada Buddhism to this day as a way to heal, protect from danger and bless.[77] Some of these are short Buddhist texts, like the Mangala Sutta, Ratana Sutta, and the Metta Sutta.

Theravada

According to the American Buddhist teacher Jack Kornfield:[78]

The use of mantra or the repetition of certain phrases in Pali is a highly common form of meditation in the Theravada tradition. Simple mantras use repetition of the Buddha's name, "Buddho", [as "Buddho" is actually a title rather than a name] or use the "Dhamma", or the "Sangha", the community, as mantra words. Other used mantras are directed toward developing loving kindness. Some mantras direct attention to the process of change by repeating the Pali phrase that means "everything changes", while other mantras are used to develop equanimity with phrases that would be translated, "let go".

"In contemporary Theravada practice, mantra practice is often combined with breathing meditation, so that one recites a mantra simultaneously with in-breath and out-breath to help develop tranquility and concentration. Mantra meditation is especially popular among lay people. Like other basic concentration exercises, it can be used simply to the mind, or it can be the basis for an insight practice where the mantra becomes the focus of observation of how life unfolds, or an aid in surrendering and letting go."[79]

The "Buddho" mantra is widespread in the Thai Forest Tradition and was taught by Ajahn Chah and his students.[80] Another popular mantra in Thai Buddhism is Samma-Araham, referring to the Buddha who has 'perfectly' (samma) attained 'perfection in the Buddhist sense' (araham), used in Dhammakaya meditation.[81][82]

In the Tantric Theravada tradition of Southeast Asia, mantras are central to their method of meditation. Popular mantras in this tradition include Namō Buddhaya ("Homage to the Buddha") and Araham ("Worthy One"). There are Thai Buddhist amulet katha: that is, mantras to be recited while holding an amulet.[83]

Mahayana Buddhism

Letter A in Siddham script, the seed mantra of Prajñāpāramitā in Mahayana Buddhism

A stone inscription of the Buddhist "Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī" in Siddham script at Asakusa Temple in Tokyo.

The use of mantras became very popular with the rise of Mahayana Buddhism. Many Mahayana sutras contain mantras, bijamantras ("seed" mantras), dharanis and other similar phrases which were chanted or used in meditation.

According to Edward Conze, Buddhists initially used mantras as protective spells like the Ratana Sutta for apotropaic reasons. Even at this early stage, there was an idea that these spells were somehow connected with the Dharma in a deep sense. Conze argues that in Mahayana sutras like the White Lotus Sutra, and the Lankavatara Sutra, mantras become more important for spiritual reasons and their power increases. For Conze, the final phase of the development of Buddhist mantras is the tantric phase of Mantrayana. In this tantric phase, mantras are at the very center of the path to Buddhahood, acting as a part of the supreme method of meditation and spiritual practice.

One popular bija (seed) mantra in Mahayana Buddhism is the Sanskrit letter A (see A in Buddhism). This seed mantra was equated with Mahayana doctrines like Prajñāparamita (the Perfection of Wisdom), emptiness and non-arising.[84][85] This seed mantra remains in use in Shingon, Dzogchen and Rinzai Zen. Mahayana Buddhism also adopted the Om mantra, which is found incorporated into various Mahayana Buddhist mantras (like the popular Om Mani Padme Hum).

Another early and influential Mahayana "mantra" or dharani is the Arapacana alphabet (of non-Sanskrit origin, possibly Karosthi) which is used as a contemplative tool in the Long Prajñāpāramitā sutras.[86][87] The entire alphabet runs:[86]

a ra pa ca na la da ba ḍa ṣa va ta ya ṣṭa ka sa ma ga stha ja śva dha śa kha kṣa sta jña
rta ha bha cha sma hva tsa bha ṭha ṇa pha ska ysa śca ṭa ḍha

In this practice, each letter stood for a specific idea (for example, "a" stands for non-arising (anutpada), and pa stands for "ultimate truth" (paramārtha).[86] As such, this practice was also a kind of mnemonic technique (dhāraṇīmukha) which allowed one to remember the key points of the teaching.[88]

The Mahayana sutras introduced various mantras into Mahayana Buddhism, such as:

Mahayana sutras or texts often begin with the mantra: Oṃ namaḥ sarvajñāya (or just: namaḥ sarvajñāya, "Homage to omniscience") [89]

Other Mahayana texts begin with Oṃ namo ratnatrayāya (Homage to the Three Jewels) [90]

Shakyamuni Buddha's Mantra: Oṃ muni muni mahāmuni śākyamuni svāhā [91]

Heart sutra (Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya) mantra: Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā

The mantra of bodhisattva Mañjuśrī: Oṃ arapacana dhīḥ

Prajñāparamita-devi mantra from The Sutra of Mañjuśrī's Questions: Nama ārya prajñā pāramitāyāi svāhā [92]

Kauśikaprajñāpāramitāsūtra contains many Prajñāparamita mantras including: oṃ hrī śrī dhī śruti smṛti mati gati vijaye svāhā [93]

A protective mantra found in the Sanskrit Lotus Sutra: agaṇe gaṇe gauri gandhāri caṇḍālī mātaṅgi pukkasi saṃkule vrūsali sisi svāhā [94]

Medicine Guru mantra (in the Sutra of Medicine Guru): Oṃ bhaiṣajye bhaiṣajye

mahābhaiṣajya-samudgate svāhā

Avalokiteshvara's mantra (the Mani mantra): Oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ, first appearing in the Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra (4th-5th century CE)

Cundī dhāraṇī or mantra also first appeared in the Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra: namaḥ saptānāṃ samyaksaṃbuddha koṭīnāṃ tadyathā oṃ cale cule cunde svāhā

Amitabha Sukhavati Dhāraṇī, sometimes called the Pure Land Rebirth Mantra

Mantra of Light of the Great Consecration (Ch: 大灌頂光真言): Oṃ Amogha Vairocana Mahāmudrā Maṇipadma Jvalapravartāya Hūṃ

East Asian Buddhism

Illustration of the Śūraṅgama Mantra's "Heart Mantra" (hṛdaya): Oṃ anale anale viśade viśade vīra vajradhare bandha bandhani vajrapāṇi phaṭ hūṃ phaṭ svāhā.

In Chinese Buddhism, various mantras, including the Great Compassion Mantra, the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī from the Uṣṇīṣa Vijaya Dhāraṇī Sutra, the Mahāmāyūrī Vidyārājñī Dhāraṇī, the Heart Sutra and various forms of Buddha remembrance are commonly chanted by both monastics and laymen. In China and Vietnam, a set of mantras known as the Ten Small Mantras (Chinese: 十小咒; Pinyin: Shíxiǎozhòu)[95] was established by the monk Yulin (Chinese: 玉琳國師; Pinyin: Yùlín Guóshī), a teacher of the Qing dynasty Shunzhi Emperor (1638 – 1661), for monks, nuns, and laity to chant during morning liturgical services.[96] This set of mantras is still chanted in modern Chinese Buddhism.[97]

Zen Buddhism also makes use of esoteric mantras, a practice which can be traced back to the Tang dynasty. Mantras and dharanis are recited in all Zen traditions, including Japanese Zen, Korean Seon, Chinese Chan and Vietnamese Thien. One of these is the Śūraṅgama Dharani, which has been taught by various modern Chan and Zen monks, such as Venerable Hsuan Hua.[98] This long dharani is associated with the protective deity Sitatpatra. The short heart mantra of this dharani is also popular in East Asian Buddhism.

Shaolin temple monks also made use of esoteric mantras and dharani.[99]

Chinese Mantrayana and Japanese Shingon

Japanese Mandala of the Mantra of Light, an important mantra of the Shingon and Kegon sects

Chinese Esoteric Buddhism also known as Zhēnyán (Chinese: 真言, lit. "true word", which is the translation for "mantra") draws extensively on mantras. This tradition was established during the Tang dynasty by Indian tantric masters like Śubhakarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra. Chinese esoteric Buddhist practice was based on deity yoga and the "three mysteries": mantra, mudra and mandala. These three mysteries allow the Buddhist yogi to tap into the body, speech and mind of the Buddhas.[100]

This tradition was transmitted to Japan by Kūkai (774–835), who founded the Japanese Shingon (Japanese for Zhēnyán) mantra vehicle. Kūkai saw a mantra as a manifestation

of the true nature of reality which is saturated with meaning. For Kūkai, a mantra is nothing but the speech of the Buddha Mahavairocana, the "ground dharmakaya" which is the ultimate source of all reality. According to Kūkai, Shingon mantras contain the entire meaning of all the scriptures and indeed the entire universe (which is itself the sermon of the Dharmakaya).[101] Kūkai argues that mantras are effective because: "a mantra is suprarational; It eliminates ignorance when meditated upon and recited. A single word contains a thousand truths; One can realize Suchness here and now." [102]

One of Kūkai's distinctive contributions was to take this symbolic association even further by saying that there is no essential difference between the syllables of mantras and sacred texts, and those of ordinary language. If one understood the workings of mantra, then any sounds could be a representative of ultimate reality. This emphasis on sounds was one of the drivers for Kūkai's championing of the phonetic writing system, the kana, which was adopted in Japan around the time of Kūkai. He is generally credited with the invention of the kana, but there is apparently some doubt about this story amongst scholars.

This mantra-based theory of language had a powerful effect on Japanese thought and society which up until Kūkai's time had been dominated by imported Chinese culture of thought, particularly in the form of the Classical Chinese language which was used in the court and amongst the literati, and Confucianism which was the dominant political ideology. In particular, Kūkai was able to use this new theory of language to create links between indigenous Japanese culture and Buddhism. For instance, he made a link between the Buddha Mahavairocana and the Shinto sun Goddess Amaterasu. Since the emperors were thought to be descended from Amaterasu, Kūkai had found a powerful connection here that linked the emperors with the Buddha, and also in finding a way to integrate Shinto with Buddhism, something that had not happened with Confucianism. Buddhism then became essentially an indigenous religion in a way that Confucianism had not. And it was through language and mantra that this connection was made. Kūkai helped to elucidate what mantra is in a way that had not been done before: he addresses the fundamental questions of what a text is, how signs function, and above all, what language is. In this, he covers some of the same ground as modern day Structuralists and other scholars of language, although he comes to very different conclusions.

In this system of thought, all sounds are said to originate from "a". For esoteric Buddhism "a" has a special function because it is associated with Shunyata or the idea that no thing exists in its own right, but is contingent upon causes and conditions. (See Dependent origination) In Sanskrit "a" is a prefix which changes the meaning of a word into its opposite, so "vidya" is understanding, and "avidya" is ignorance (the same arrangement is also found in many Greek words, like e.g. "atheism" vs. "theism" and "apathy" vs. "pathos"). The letter a is both visualised in the Siddham script and pronounced in rituals and meditation practices. In the Mahavairocana Sutra which is central to Shingon Buddhism it says: "Thanks to the original vows of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, a miraculous force resides in the mantras, so that by pronouncing them

one acquires merit without limits". [in Conze, p. 183]

A mantra is Kuji-kiri in Shingon as well as in Shugendo. The practice of writing mantras, and copying texts as a spiritual practice, became very refined in Japan, and some of these are written in the Japanese script and Siddham script of Sanskrit, recited in either language.

Main Shingon Mantras

A Japanese depiction of the Amida Triad as Seed Syllables (in Siddham Script). Visualizing deities in the form of seed mantras is a common Vajrayana meditation. In Shingon, one of the most common practices is Ajikan (阿字觀), meditating on the mantric syllable A.

There are thirteen mantras used in Shingon Buddhism, each dedicated to a major deity (the "thirteen Buddhas" - jūsanbutsu - of Shingon). The mantras are drawn from the Vairocana-bhīṣaṇa Sūtra. The mantra for each deity name in Japanese, its equivalent name in Sanskrit, the Sanskrit mantra, and the Japanese version in the Shingon tradition are as follows:[103]

Fudōmyōō (不動明王, Acala): Sanskrit: namaḥ samanta vajrācāra mahāroṣaṇa sphoṭaya hūṃ (Shingon transliteration: nōmaku samanda bazaratan senda makaroshada sowataya untarata kanman)

Shaka nyorai (釈迦如来, Sakyamuni): namaḥ samanta buddhānāṃ bhaḥ (nōmaku sanmanda bodanan baku)

Monju bosatsu (文殊菩薩, Manjushri): oṃ ra pa ca na (on arahashanō)

Fugen bosatsu (普賢菩薩, Samantabhadra): oṃ samayas tvaṃ (on sanmaya satoban)

Jizō bosatsu (地藏菩薩, Kṣitigarbha): oṃ ha ha ha vismaye svāhā (on kakaka bisanmaei sowaka)

Miroku bosatsu (弥勒菩薩, Maitreya): oṃ maitreya svāhā (on maitareiya sowaka)

Yakushi nyorai (药师如来, Bhaisajyaguru): oṃ huru huru caṇḍāli mātangi svāhā (on korokoro sendari matōgi sowaka)

Kanzeon bosatsu (薩世音菩薩, Avalokitesvara): oṃ ārolik svāhā (on arorikya sowaka)

Seishi bosatsu (勢至菩薩, Mahasthamaprabhata): oṃ saṃ jaṃ jaṃ saḥ svāhā (on san zan saku sowaka)

Amida nyorai (阿弥陀如来, Amitabha): oṃ amṛta teje hara hūṃ (on amirita teisei kara un)

Ashuku nyorai (阿闍如来, Akṣobhya): oṃ akṣobhya hūṃ (on akishubiya un)

Dainichi nyorai (大日如来, Vairocana): oṃ vi ra hūṃ (on abiraunken basara datoban)

Kokūzō bosatsu (虚空藏菩薩, Akāśagarbha): namo ākāśagarbhāya oṃ ārya kāmāri mauli svāhā (nōbō akyashakyarabaya on arikyā mari bori sowaka)

Other Japanese Buddhist traditions

Mantras are also an important element of other Japanese Buddhist traditions. The Tendai school includes extensive repertoire of Esoteric Buddhist practices, which include the use of mantras.

Nichiren Buddhist practice focuses on the chanting of one single mantra or phrase: Nam Myōhō Renge Kyō (南無妙法蓮華經, which means "Homage to the Lotus Sutra").

Japanese Zen also makes use of mantras. One example is the Mantra of Light (kōmyō shingon), which is common in Japanese Soto Zen and was derived from the Shingon sect.[104] The use of esoteric practices (such as mantra) within Zen is sometimes termed "mixed Zen" (kenshū zen 兼修禪). Keizan Jōkin (1264–1325) is seen as a key figure that introduced this practice into the Soto school.[105][106] A common mantra used in Soto Zen is the Śūraṅgama mantra (Ryōgon shu 楞嚴呪; T. 944A).

In Northern Vajrayana Buddhism

Mantrayana (Sanskrit), which may be translated as "way of the mantra", was the original self-identifying name of those that have come to be determined 'Nyingmapa'. [107] The Nyingmapa which may be rendered as "those of the ancient way", a name constructed due to the genesis of the Sarma "fresh", "new" traditions. Mantrayana has developed into a synonym of Vajrayana.

According to the important Mantrayana Buddhist text called the Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa, mantras are efficacious because they are manifestations of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. As such, a mantra is coextensive with the bodies of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. When one recites a mantra, one's mind is coextensive with the mantras, and thus, one's mind makes a connection with the mantra's deity and their meditative power (samadhi-bala).

Om mani padme hum

Main article: Om mani padme hum

Om mani padme hum on the Gangpori (photo 1938–1939 German expedition to Tibet.

The mantra of Padmasambhava (Om Āḥ Hūṃ Vajra Guru Padma Siddhi Hūṃ), in Lanydza (Ranjana) and Tibetan script.

Probably the most famous mantra of Buddhism is Om mani padme hum, the six syllable mantra of the Bodhisattva of compassion Avalokiteśvara (Tibetan: Chenrezig, Chinese: Guanyin). This mantra is particularly associated with the four-armed Shadakshari form of Avalokiteśvara. The Dalai Lama is said to be an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara, and so the mantra is especially revered by his devotees.

The book Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism by Lama Anagarika Govinda, gives a classic example of how such a mantra can contain many levels of symbolic meaning.

Other

The following list of mantras is from Kailash: A Journal of Himalayan Studies, Volume 1, Number 2, 1973. (pp. 168–169) (augmented by other contributors). The mantras used in Tibetan Buddhist practice are in Sanskrit, to preserve the original mantras.

Visualizations and other practices are usually done in the Tibetan language.

Om vagishvara hum This is the mantra of the Mahabodhisattva Manjusri, Tibetan: Jampelyang (Wylie "'jam dpal dbyangs")... The Buddha in his wisdom aspect.

Om vajrasattva hum The short mantra for White Vajrasattva, there is also a full 100-syllable mantra for Vajrasattva.

Om vajrapani namo hum The mantra of the Buddha as Protector of the Secret Teachings. i.e.: as the Mahabodhisattva Channa Dorje (Vajrapani).

Om ah hum vajra guru padma siddhi hum The mantra of the Vajraguru Guru Padma Sambhava who established Mahayana Buddhism and Tantra in Tibet.

Om tare tuttare ture mama ayurjnana punye pushting svaha The mantra of Dölkar or White Tara, the emanation of Arya Tara [Chittamani Tara]. Variants: Om tare tuttare ture mama ayurjnana punye pushting kuru swaha (Drikung Kagyu), Om tare tuttare ture mama ayu punye jnana puktrim kuru soha (Karma Kagyu).

Duration: 11 seconds.0:11

Om Tare Tutare Ture Soha.

Om tare tuttare ture svaha, mantra of Green Arya Tara—Jetsun Dolma or Tara, the Mother of the Buddhas: om represents Tara's sacred body, speech, and mind. Tare means liberating from all discontent. Tutare means liberating from the eight fears, the external dangers, but mainly from the internal dangers, the delusions. Ture means liberating from duality; it shows the "true" cessation of confusion. Soha means "may the meaning of the mantra take root in my mind."

According to Tibetan Buddhism, this mantra (Om tare tutare ture soha) can not only eliminate disease, troubles, disasters, and karma, but will also bring believers blessings, longer life, and even the wisdom to transcend one's circle of reincarnation. Tara representing long life and health.

Om amaraṇi jīvantaye svāhā (Tibetan version: om ā ma ra ṇi dzi wan te ye svā hā) The mantra of the Buddha of limitless life: the Buddha Amitayus (Tibetan Tsépagmed) in celestial form.

Om dhrung svaha The purification mantra of the mother Namgyalma.

Om ami dhewa hri The mantra of the Buddha Amitabha (Opagme(d) in Tibetan) of the Western Pureland, his skin the color of the setting sun.

Om ah ra pa ca na dhih The mantra of the "sweet-voiced one", Jampelyang (Wylie "'jam dpal dbyangs") or Manjusri, the Bodhisattva of wisdom.

Om muni muni maha muniye sakyamuni swaha The mantra of Buddha Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha

Om gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha The mantra of the Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra (Heart Sutra)

Namo bhagavate Bhaishajya-guru vaidurya-praba-rajaya tathagataya arhate samyak-sambuddhaya tadyata *Tadyata OM bhaishajye bhaishajye maha bhaishajya raja-samudgate svaha The mantra of the 'Medicine Buddha', Bhaiṣajya-guru (or Bhaishajyaguru), from Chinese translations of the Master of Healing Sutra.

In Bon

There are also numerous mantras in the Bön religion such as Om Ma Tri Mu Ye Sa Le

Du.[108]

Zoroastrianism

Main article: Manthra (Zoroastrianism)

In Zoroastrianism, the use of mantras, commonly called manthra (Avestan: *maθra*), goes back to Zarathustra himself, who describes his role as a prophet of the creator deity Ahura Mazda explicitly as a knower of mantras (Avestan: *maθran*; Sanskrit: *mántrin*). In the Zoroastrian tradition, a mantra is usually a shorter inspired utterance that accompanies religious rituals. They differ from the longer, often eight-syllable praise songs (called Yasht in the Avesta) as well as the often eleven-syllable songs (called Gathas in the Avesta as well as in the Vedas).[109]

Dunhuang manuscript from the 9th century CE, containing the Ashem Vohu mantra in Sogdian.

The four most important Zoroastrian mantras are the Ahuna Vairya, the Ashem Vohu, the Yenghe hatam, and the Airyaman ishya. The Ashem Vohu states:

aṣəm vohū vahištəm astī
uštā astī uštā ahmāi
hyaṭ aṣāi vahištāi aṣəm

Holiness (Asha) is the best of all good:
it is also happiness.
Happy the man who is holy with perfect holiness!

— Ashem Vohu.[110]

Both Vedic and Avestan mantras have a number of functional similarities. One of these is the idea that truth, when properly expressed in the mantra, can compel a deity to grant the speaker's request (compare Sacca-kiriya). Another similarity is the Vedic and Avestic association of mantras with paths, so that a properly formulated mantra can open a path to the deity addressed.[111] Because of the etymological and conceptual similarity, such religious utterances must therefore have already been known during the common Indo-Iranian period, when the people of the Avesta and of the Vedas formed a single people.[112] They are, therefore, not derived from the Vedic tradition, but represent an independent development of ancient Iran, corresponding to that in ancient India.[113] The study of their commonalities is therefore important for understanding the poetic and religious traditions of the early Indo-Iranians.[11]

Jainism

Namokar Mantra shrine at a Jain center in New Jersey

In Jainism mantras are mainly used for praising the omniscient enlightened ones (Arihants), or praising the five supreme types of beings (Pañca-Parameṣṭhi). Some

mantras are also used for seeking forgiveness, or to enhance intellect, prosperity, wealth or fame. There are many mantras in Jainism; most of them are in Sanskrit or Prakrit, but in the last few centuries, some have been composed in Hindi or Gujarati languages. Mantras, couplets, are either chanted or sung, either aloud or by merely moving lips or in silence by thought.[114]

Namokar

Some examples of Jain mantras are Bhaktamara Stotra, Uvasagharam Stotra and Rishi Mandal Mantra. The greatest is the Namokar or Namokar Mantra.[115] Acharya Sushil Kumar, a self-realized master of the secrets of the Mantra, wrote in 1987: "There is a deep, secret science to the combination of sounds. Specific syllables are seeds for the awakening of latent powers. Only a person who has been initiated into the vibrational realms, who has actually experienced this level of reality, can fully understand the Science of Letters...the Nomokar Mantra is a treasured gift to humanity of unestimable (sic) worth for the purification, upliftment and spiritual evolution of everyone.".[116] His book, *The Song of the Soul*, is a practical manual to unlock the secrets of the mantra. "Chanting with Guruji" is a compilation of well-known Jain mantras, including the Rishi Mandal Mantra.[117]

The Navkar Mantra (literally, "Nine Line Mantra") is the central mantra of Jainism. "It is the essence of the gospel of the Tirthankars." [118] The initial 5 lines consist of salutations to various purified souls, and the latter 4 lines are explanatory in nature, highlighting the benefits and greatness of this mantra.

According to the timeperiods of this world or the Kaals, we are living in the era of Pancham Kaal or Fifth Kaal. It started 4 months after the Nirvana of the last tirthankar of Jainism, Mahaveer Swami. In the Pancham Kaal we are only eligible to know these basic 5 lines and the concluding 4 lines of the Namokar Mantra, but it is believed that the mantra exceeds till infinity. If it is chanted with complete faith, it could even do or undo the impossible. Jains also believe that it is the elementary form of all other Mantras. It is renowned as the King of all Mantras . It is also held that even the Mantras of other ancient religions like Hinduism & Buddhism are also derived from the Navkar Mantra. Indeed, it is held that 8.4 million Mantras have been derived from the Navkar Mantra.[citation needed]

The Mantra is as follows (Prakrit, English):[citation needed]

Namo Arihantânam I bow to the Arihantâs (Conquerors who showed the path of liberation).

Namo Siddhânam I bow to the Siddhâs (Liberated Souls).

Namo Âyariyânam I bow to the Âchâryas (Preceptors or Spiritual Leaders).

Namo Uvajjhâyanam I bow to the Upadhyâya (Teachers).

Namo Loe Savva Sahûnam I bow to all the Sadhûs in the world (Saints or Sages).

Eso Panch Namokkaro,

Savva Pâvappanâsano,

Mangalanam Cha Savvesim,
Padhamam Havai Mangalam. This fivefold salutation (mantra) destroys all sins
and of all auspicious mantras, (it) is the foremost.

One of the best approach to chant the Namokar Mantra while keeping in mind the flow
of the chakras is to focus on each chakra as you recite each phrase of the mantra . Here
is a suggested sequence :

1. Begin by taking a few deep breaths and focusing your attention on the base of your spine, where the first chakra (Muladhara) is located. As you inhale, imagine energy flowing up from the earth and into your root chakra.
2. As you recite "Namo Arihantanam," visualize a bright white light at the base of your spine and feel the energy rising up through your body while bowing to all Arihants at the Same Time.
3. As you recite "Namo Siddhanam," focus on your second chakra (Svadhithana), located in the lower abdomen. Visualize a warm orange light here, and feel the energy of creativity while bowing to all Siddhas.
4. As you recite "Namo Ayariyanam," bring your attention to your third chakra (Manipura), located in the solar plexus. Imagine a bright yellow light here, representing personal power and will while bowing to all Arihants at the same Time.
5. As you recite "Namo Uvajhayanam," focus on your fourth chakra (Anahata), located in the center of your chest. Visualize a green light here, representing love and compassion while bowing to all Upadhayas at the Same time.
6. As you recite "Namo Loye Savva Sahunam," bring your attention to your fifth chakra (Vishuddha), located in the throat. Imagine a blue light here representing communication and self- expression while bowing to all Sadhus in the Dhai Dweep.
7. As you recite "Eso Panch Namukaro," focus on your sixth chakra (Ajna), located in the center of your forehead Visualize a deep purple light here representing intuition and spiritual insight.
8. Finally, as you recite "Savva Pavappanasano," bring your attention to your seventh chakra (Sahasrara), located at the crown of your head. Imagine a bright white light here, representing spiritual enlightenment and connection to the divine entity.

Repeat the mantra several times, moving

your awareness up through each chakra

with each phrase. This can help to

balance and activate your energy centers.

Universal compassion

Pratikraman also contains the following prayer:[119]

Khāmemi savva-jīve savvē jive khamantu me I ask pardon of all creatures, may all creatures pardon me.

Mitti me savva-bhūesu, veraṃ mejjha na keṇavi May I have a friendship with all beings and enemy with none.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness is one of the main virtues Jains cultivate. Kṣamāpanā, or supreme forgiveness, forms part of one of the ten characteristics of dharma.[120]

In the pratikramana prayer, Jains repeatedly seek forgiveness from various creatures—even from ekindriyas or single sensed beings like plants and microorganisms that they may have harmed while eating and doing routine activities.[121] Forgiveness is asked by uttering the phrase, Micchāmi dukkaḍaṃ. Micchāmi dukkaḍaṃ is a Prakrit phrase literally meaning "may all the evil that has been done be fruitless." [122]

In their daily prayers and samayika, Jains recite the following Iryavahi sutra in Prakrit, seeking forgiveness from literally all creatures while involved in routine activities:[123]

May you, O Revered One, voluntarily permit me. I would like to confess my sinful acts committed while walking. I honour your permission. I desire to absolve myself of the sinful acts by confessing them. I seek forgiveness from all those living beings which I may have tortured while walking, coming and going, treading on a living organism, seeds, green grass, dew drops, ant hills, moss, live water, live earth, spider web and others. I seek forgiveness from all these living beings, be they one sensed, two sensed, three sensed, four sensed or five sensed, which I may have kicked, covered with dust, rubbed with earth, collided with other, turned upside down, tormented, frightened, shifted from one place to another or killed and deprived them of their lives. (By confessing) may I be absolved of all these sins.

Sikhism

Illuminated Adi Granth folio with Mūl Mantar of Guru Gobind Singh

In the Sikh religion, a mantar or mantra is a Shabad (Word or hymn) from the Adi Granth to concentrate the mind on God. Through repetition of the mantra, and listening to one's own voice, thoughts are reduced and the mind rises above materialism to tune into the voice of God.

Mantras in Sikhism are fundamentally different from the secret mantras used in other religions.[124] Unlike in other religions, Sikh mantras are open for anyone to use. They are used openly and are not taught in secret sessions but are used in front of assemblies of Sikhs.[124]

The Mool Mantar, the first composition of Guru Nanak, is the second most widely known Sikh mantra.

The most widely known mantra in the Sikh faith is "Wahe Guru." According to the Sikh poet Bhai Gurdas, the word "Wahe Guru" is the Gurmantra, or the mantra given by the Guru, and eliminates ego.[125]

According to the 10th Sikh Master, Guru Gobind Singh, the "Wahe Guru" mantra was given by God to the Order of the Khalsa, and reforms the apostate into the purified.

Chinese religions

The influence of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism during the Six Dynasties period and the Tang led to the widespread use of Buddhist esoteric practices in other Chinese religions such as Taoism. This included the use of mantras.[126] Mantras are often still used in Chinese Taoism, such as the words in Dàfàn yǐnyǔ wúliàng yīn (大梵隱語無量音), the recitation of a deity's name. Another example of a Taoist mantra is found in one of the most popular liturgies in Taoism (dating from the Tang dynasty), the Pei-tou yen-sheng ching (The North Star Scripture of Longevity), which contains a long mantra called the "North Star Mantra." The text claims that this mantra "can deliver you from disaster," "ward off evil and give you prosperity and longevity," "help you accumulate good deeds" and give you peace of mind.[127]

The Indian syllable om (唵) is also used in Taoist esotericism. After the arrival of Buddhism many Taoist sects started to use Sanskrit syllables in their mantras or talismans, as well as creating some of their own mantras based on Sanskrit to enhance one's spiritual power aside from the traditional Han incantations. One example of this is the "heart mantra" of Pu Hua Tian Zun (普化天尊), a Taoist deity manifested from the first thunder and head of the "36 thunder gods" in orthodox religious Taoism. His mantra is "Ān hōng zhā lì sà mó luō - 唵吽吒唎薩囉囉". Taoists believe this incantation to be the heart mantra of Pu Hua Tian Zun which will protect them from bad qi and calm down emotions. Taoist mantra recitation may also be practiced along with extensive visualization exercises.[128]

There are also mantras in Cheondoism, Daesun Jinrihoe, Jeung San Do and Onmyōdō. [129]

Other Chinese religions have also adopted the use of mantras.[130][131][132] These include:

Námó Tiānyuán Tàibǎo Āmítuófó (南無天元太保阿彌陀佛) The mantra of Xiantiandao and Shengdao in Chinese.

Wútàifó Mílè (無太佛彌勒) The mantra of Yiguandao[133] in Chinese.

Guānshìyīn Púsà (觀世音菩薩) The mantra of the Li-ism[134][135] in Chinese.

Zhēnkōng jiāxiāng, wúshēng fùmǔ (真空家鄉，無生父母) The mantra of the LuoJiao[136][137] in Chinese.

Zhōng Shù Lián Míng Dé, Zhèng Yì Xìn Rěn Gōng, Bó Xiào Rén Cí Jiào, Jié Jiǎn Zhēn Lǐ Hé (忠恕廉明德，正義信忍公，博孝仁慈覺，節儉真禮和) The mantra of the Tiender and the Lord of Universe Church[138] in Chinese.

Qīngjìng Guāngmíng Dàlì Zhìhuì Wúshàng Zhìzhēn Móní Guāngfó (清淨光明大力智慧無上至真摩尼光佛) The mantra of the Manichaeism in Chinese.

See also

Buddhist chant

Jesus Prayer

Khadgamala

Kirtan

Kotodama

Kuji-in

Pranava yoga

Prayer beads

Sandhyavandanam

Dhikr

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Some very common mantras, called Nama japa, are: "Om Namah (name of deity)"; for example, Om Namah Shivaya or Om Namo Bhagavate Rudraya Namah (Om and salutations to Lord Shiva); Om Namo Narayanaya or Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevāya (Om and salutations to Lord Vishnu); Om Shri Ganeshaya Namah (Om and salutations to Shri Ganesha)

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AI Overview

Sigils and Glyphs : r/TheOwlHouse

Sigils and glyphs are both types of meaningful symbols, but sigils are typically unique, personal magical symbols created to manifest a specific desire (like a monogram of your wish), while glyphs are broader terms for any inscribed symbol, often part of a writing system, that conveys meaning, like hieroglyphs or even danger signs, sometimes acting as components in larger magical systems. Think of sigils as custom-made magical "logos" and glyphs as more general "characters" or symbols with inherent meaning, with sigils often being complex glyphs themselves.

Sigils

Definition: A pictorial signature or symbol representing a specific magical intention, desire, or spirit.

Creation: Often formed by condensing letters of a statement (e.g., "I want wealth") into a unique monogram or abstract design.

Purpose: To bypass the conscious mind and charge the subconscious to achieve a goal, activated by charging (e.g., burning, meditation) and then often forgotten.

Examples: A unique symbol created for personal protection, success, or love.

Glyphs

Definition: Any carved or inscribed symbol that conveys meaning, which can be a letter,

word, or pictograph.

Creation: Inscribed, drawn, or carved; can be part of a formal system or a simple mark.

Purpose: To communicate information, define a character, or function as magical components.

Examples: The tilde (~) on 'ñ', Egyptian hieroglyphs, or a radiation hazard symbol.

Key Differences & Overlap

Specificity vs. Generality: Sigils are highly specific and personal; glyphs are general.

Relationship: A sigil is a type of glyph, but not all glyphs are sigils. A glyph can be a rune, a letter, or a complex magical symbol.

Usage: Sigils are deeply tied to personal intent in chaos magic; glyphs are fundamental units of written or symbolic communication, sometimes forming larger magical circuits (like in some fantasy lore).

Sigils, glyphs, and runes. : r/worldbuilding - Reddit

Jan 2, 2024 — Comments Section * Positive-Height-2260. • 2y ago. Perhaps runes are letters/numbers, glyphs are words, and sigils are ...

Reddit

Sigil Magick | Create, charge, activate & use Sigils | History of ...

Apr 1, 2022 — hi lovelies and welcome to the witch's cookery. today I'm back with another fun witch vlog for you discussing. one of t...

YouTube

·The witches' cookery

22:46

Glyph - Definition, Meaning & Synonyms - Vocabulary.com

A glyph is a symbol — it can represent a word, letter, or number, and it can also be a mark that tells you how to pronounce a lett...

Vocabulary.com

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ELI5 What is the difference between runes, glyphs, and ...

Reddit · r/explainlikeimfive

6 comments · 5 years ago

Sigils are glyphs that are primarily used for identification. Trade marks, monograms, and the like are sigils. Originally, sigils were occult ...

6 answers

.

Top answer:

A glyph is, technically, any distinct symbol that is used together with other glyphs to ...

Differences between Glyphs, Sigils and runes? : r/occult ...

4 answers

Sep 4, 2020

Sigils, glyphs, and runes. : r/worldbuilding - Reddit

5 answers

Jan 3, 2024

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People also ask

What are sigils used for?

What's the difference between glyphs and runes?

What is an example of a glyph?

What is the meaning of sigils?

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Sigil

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigil>

A sigil (/ˈsɪdʒ l/) [1] is a type of symbol used in magic. The term usually refers to a pictorial signature of a spirit (such as an angel, demon, or deity).

List of sigils of demons

Magic square

Sigillum Dei

Sigil of Baphomet

Images

Collection of Spell Sigils or Glyphs (whatever you want to ...

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What are some resources for learning about sigils, runes ...

Facebook · Bitch please I'm a witch ✂️🔮

8 comments · 1 year ago

Sigils are often described as a tool to help you in your craft, they can protect your or your space, be used in a spell to amplify your ...

Sigils and Glyphs from www.facebook.com

Top answer:

Cunningham made an encyclopedia of signs and sigils, it's a useful part of my library. ...

What Is a Sigil (And How Is It Different from a Glyph)?

templeoftherememberedflame.com

<https://www.templeoftherememberedflame.com> › post

Jun 10, 2025 — A sigil is a transmitter. It's not just written. It's encoded. Felt. It holds not just information—but frequency. Sigils are glyphs with soul.

Sigils vs Runes vs Glyphs vs Wards: Which Arcane mark is ...

CBR Community

<https://community.cbr.com> › ... › Comic Book Rumbles

Oct 9, 2023 — Sigils, Runes, and Glyphs are all pretty much the same thing. Writing mystic symbols to do magic. Sigils mostly just power people up, but wards ...

HOW TO MAKE A SIGIL || Witchcraft 101

ARCANE ALCHEMY

<http://www.arcane-alchemy.com> › blog › how-to-make...

Mar 25, 2020 — The sigil making process is composed of two phases: construction and charging. In the first part, the sigil is drawn and created as a physical object.

Sigils and Glyphs

Stormforge Productions

<https://stormforgeproductions.com> › 2016/07/22 › sigil...

Jul 22, 2016 — Coming in at less than 40 pages, GLYPH is there for quick and easy games, for those times you just want to pick up and play, or just want to run ...

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what is the difference between a sigil and a...

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<https://sigilathenaeum.tumblr.com> › post › what-is-the-di...

May 17, 2016 — They are similar, but glyphs are not magical. They are symbols with an agreed upon meaning meant to be read from it.

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AI Overview

AdinkraCode - Gamel Clodin

The "Adinkra code" refers to the rich visual language of West African Adinkra symbols, used by the Akan people of Ghana to represent proverbs, concepts, and wisdom through geometric patterns, conveying ideas like unity, strength, and knowledge. In physics, "Adinkras" are diagrams in supersymmetry theory that visually map particle relationships, also named after these cultural symbols, revealing deep mathematical connections. So, it's a cultural code for wisdom and a mathematical code for physics, both using symbolic patterns.

In Culture & Communication

Visual Language: Adinkra symbols are stamps used on cloth (Adinkra cloth), pottery, and art to communicate complex messages, histories, and philosophies.

Meaning: Each symbol embodies a proverb or idea, such as Sankofa (learn from the

past) or Nyansapo (wisdom knot).

Purpose: They serve as reminders of core values, virtues, and life lessons, fostering identity and cultural connection.

In Physics & Mathematics

Supersymmetry: Physicists use "Adinkras" (with a capital 'A') as diagrams to describe supersymmetric particles and their properties in a visual, code-like format.

Mathematical Links: These diagrams are linked to mathematical codes, specifically "doubly even codes", showing how patterns in culture and math can mirror each other.

"The Matrix": The connection to codes has led to theories that Adinkras might even hint at deeper structural patterns in reality, similar to the "code" in The Matrix, as noted by physicist Sylvester James Gates.

Key Takeaway

The term "Adinkra code" bridges traditional African wisdom and modern theoretical physics, showing how symbolic patterns can encode complex information, whether cultural values or physical laws.

Adinkra symbols (physics) - Wikipedia

In supergravity and supersymmetric representation theory, Adinkra symbols are a graphical representation of supersymmetric algebra...

Wikipedia

Symbols of Power: Adinkras and the Nature of Reality - OnBeing.org

Apr 8, 2012 — Complex ideas, complex shapes Adinkras — geometric objects that encode mathematical relationships between supersymmetri...

The On Being Project

The Matrix through Adinkras depicting math - harshmode

Sep 16, 2015 — It was almost as if our reality is embedded using computer code like in the movie 'The Matrix'. Gates says to imagine ...

harshmode

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Adinkra Codes: An Elementary Introduction

adinkrasymbols.org

<https://www.adinkrasymbols.org> › pages › adinkra-codes

Nov 19, 2023 — Adinkra has become a handy metaphor for a geometric way of encoding the mathematical relationships between fundamental particles in supersymmetry classes.

People also ask

What are Adinkra codes in the universe?

What are Adinkra symbols?

What are the most powerful African symbols?

Who is allowed to use Adinkra symbols?

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Adinkra symbols (physics)

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Adinkra_symbols_\(ph...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adinkra_symbols_(physics))

Adinkra symbols are a graphical representation of supersymmetric algebras. ally they can be described as colored finite connected simple graphs, that are ...

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Apr 8, 2012 — Adinkras — geometric objects that encode mathematical relationships between supersymmetric particles — are named after symbols that represent ...

Videos

Unlocking the Universe's Secrets with Adrinka and Error ...

TikTok · 4biddenknowledge

Apr 7, 2023

TikTok · 4biddenknowledge

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Professor James S. Gates discovered that the entire universe runs on error-correcting codes, the same codes that run search engines and web browsers.

Can we have a real discussion about the Adinkra codes' and ...

Reddit · LewiRock

May 1, 2022

Reddit · LewiRock

0:59

How Adinkra Symbols were used to communicate deep truth ...

YouTube · SOKY TV
Apr 18, 2021
YouTube · SOKY TV

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It was originally printed in the clocks of royals to send deep truth information and important messages to the people.

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Quora

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Understanding Adinkra Symbols: Meanings, Cultural Wisdom ...

TikTok · adeche.atelier

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The Matrix Runs on Ancient Adinkra Codes

YouTube · Forbidden Mysteries

0:50

Adinkra prints are mathematical codes#africa ...

Instagram · Ashia Hunter

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Exploring Adinkra Codes and Their Meanings

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Discover the Meaning and Power of Adinkra Symbols

Instagram · Afroelle Magazine

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Exploring Adinkra Symbols and Their Spiritual Significance

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Adinkra symbols are a graphical representation of ...

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adinkra_symbols

Adinkra are symbols from the Akan people of Ghana that represent concepts or aphorisms. Adinkra are used extensively in fabrics, logos and pottery.

The Matrix through Adinkras depicting math - harshmode

harshmode.com

<https://www.harshmode.com/the-matrix-adinkras-math>

Sep 16, 2015 — Adinkras are visual representations of complex mathematical equations in physics. certain codes were present everywhere. These codes are almost ...

"Adinkra Codes" (A Secret Knowledge of The Ashanti ...

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adinkra code is a visual representation of complex mathematical equations specifically supersymmetric algebras.

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AI Overview

"Bio-Regeneration" refers to a set of spiritual and energetic practices aimed at accelerating consciousness expansion by stimulating the body's latent energy systems (DNA template, chakras, etc.). The Kathara Bio-Spiritual Healing System is the specific framework within which these technologies are taught and applied.

Bio-Regeneration and the Kathara System

Foundation in Scalar Mechanics: These techniques are based on "Keylontic Morphogenetic Science" and advanced scalar mechanics, paradigms of science not recognized by contemporary Earth science.

Purpose: The stated goal of Bio-Regeneration is to stimulate the "personal DNA template,"

"kundalini energies," "chakras," and "Merkaba vehicle," facilitating the natural integration of higher dimensional identity with earthly identity to aid in the process of "ascension".

The Kathara Grid: This system utilizes the concept of the Kathara Grid, which is described as a morphogenic and holographic blueprint for all creation, also known as the Tree of Life or Krystal Spiral.

Techniques: The methods involve specific applications of conscious energy direction within the body's manifestation template, often taught through MCEO (Melchizedek Cloister Emerald Order) Freedom Teachings.

Important Considerations

These concepts are presented as an alternative spiritual and energy healing paradigm. They are not validated or recognized by mainstream contemporary scientific or medical communities. The materials often suggest exploring these techniques in meditation or as a spiritual option.

For those interested in the scientific study of biology and regeneration, the company Takara Bio is a legitimate biotechnology company that offers research products and services.

Takara Bio—Home

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Jul 8, 2023 — The Kathara Grid is also known as the Krystal Spiral - as it holds the Codes for the inner Christos within us all. It i...

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Oct 9, 2024 — Bio-Regenesis: Progressive use of internally directed DNA Codes and Acceleration Codes. Transmission of the Kee-Ra-ShA Primal Light. Template ...

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Collective Rising (Kathara Bio-regensis)

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4.5K+ followers

Collective Rising (Kathara Bio-regensis) We aspire, through our videos and services, to help people heal, find empowerment, inner peace and regain sovereignty. ...

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YouTube · Knew Geometry

5.7K+ views · 1 year ago

1:16:01

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10 key moments in this video

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Jul 8, 2017 — Subject : Introduction to Kathara Bio-regenesis technologies, Color, Symbol, Sound and Bio-regenesis. Author : MCEO Freedom Teachings

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Mar 9, 2025 — The key to Spiritual Actualization is activation of the dormant personal 12-Strand DNA Template. The most rapid means of activating the dormant

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The KATHARA Bio-Spiritual Healing System ...

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Oct 9, 2024 — The final step in fulfilling the potentlals of original Angelic-human design is activation of the OVER TONE frequencies of the KEE-Ra-ShA'.

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What is Nsibidi? – Okwu ID

Nsibidi symbols are an ancient African system of graphic communication from southeastern Nigeria and Cameroon, representing ideas, concepts, or actions rather than sounds, used by groups like the Ejagham, Efik, and Igbo. These pictographic and logographic signs can be drawn, carved, or woven, appearing on art, textiles (like Ukara cloth), and even body art, with deeper meanings often restricted to initiated members of secret societies, conveying complex messages about life, judgment, or unity, and inspiring modern art.

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Nsibidi

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Nsibidi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nsibidi)

There are several hundred Nsibidi symbols. Nsibidi is used on wall designs, calabashes, metals (such as bronze), leaves, swords, and tattoos. Symbols including ...

Nsibidi symbols from en.wikipedia.org

The Nsibidi script ca. 600-1909 CE

African History Extra

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Jan 26, 2025 — Nsibidi is one of Africa's oldest independently invented writing systems. It's a semasiographic script comprised of ideograms and pictograms that were used in ...

What people are saying

The symbols on the side of the white building in the Black Panther movie is ancient Igbo (Nigerian) language Nsibidi which dates as far back as the 4th century was a secretive language, based on pictography, so it was about how you put the symbols together
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Picture of two Nsibidi symbol use as tattoo to cover stab scars. Nsibidi is an ancient writing system use among the Efik, Ibibio and Igbo people of West Africa.
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Joe__Bassey · X
African history enthusiast

Image of Nsibidi symbols tattooed to conceal stab scars. Nsibidi is a traditional writing system used by the Efik, Ibibio, and Igbo communities in West Africa.
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0:14
That tattoo on Jidenna's arm? It isn't random, it's Nsibidi." An Igbo writing system older than English. Symbols that carried love, justice, and secrets. Long before colonization, Nsibidi was used in courts, love letters, and sacred societies. It wasn't just for every
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Onulgbo · Facebook
Igbo people & culture promotion
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Signs with Their Meanings from the Ikom District, Southern Nigeria. African Runes
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Decorative Nsibidi refers to the use of various Nsibidi as a decorative motifs, with a symbol being stamped on clothing or carved into ...

25 answers

.

Top answer:

So I wrote a paper on Nsibidi recently, and there's a few things that are important to understand ...

Inscribing Meaning: Nsibidi / National Museum of ...

National Museum of African Art

<https://africa.si.edu> › exhibits › inscribing › nsibidi

Nsibidi comprises nearly a thousand symbols that can be drawn in the air (as gestures), on the ground, on skin (as tattoos), on houses and on art forms,

Nsibidi symbols from africa.si.edu

Here are some Nsibidi symbols and their ...

Facebook · Nsibidi

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NSIBIDI WORKBOOK [IGBO]

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<https://okwuid.com> › uploads › 2023/08 › Nsibi...

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Aug 13, 2023 — Each character (symbol) represents an Igbo word, usually monosyllabic verbs that make up much of the Igbo language. Each character has a reading ...

7 pages

Decoding Nsibidi: The Visual Writing System of ...

[africarebirth.com](https://www.africarebirth.com)

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7

8

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[AI Overview](#)

A "Ka/Ba Interface" refers to connectivity solutions for Kaba access control and time management systems, now part of dormakaba, bridging hardware (like readers, terminals) with software or other systems (like property management, alarm monitoring) using specific protocols or physical connections (USB, Ethernet, Wiegand) for functions like issuing key cards, tracking employee time, or integrating security features. The "Ka" often signifies Kaba, while "Ba" or other letters (like "B-web") denote product lines, with interfaces handling data exchange for access credentials or time punches.

Key Aspects of Kaba Interfaces:

Functionality:

Access Control: Connects readers to control units, allowing for key card encoding, guest check-in/out, and door management.

Time & Attendance: Enables employees to clock in/out, with data sent to payroll/HR

systems.

Alarm Integration: Links biometric readers with alarm systems to reduce false alarms.

Examples of Interfaces/Products:

dormakaba interface 90 10: A subterminal for Wiegand readers and digital I/O.

Kaba desktop reader B-web 91 08: A USB reader for Mifare cards.

Kaba exos 9300: A system with open interfaces for integration.

Kaba Terminal 97 00: A touchscreen terminal with network (Ethernet) and optional Bluetooth/biometric connectivity.

Technical Standards: Utilizes various communication methods, including USB (V2.0), Ethernet, and specific data formats (like KB-TK standard for payroll).

Customization: Interfaces can often be configured or integrated with company-specific software (e.g., property management systems like Resort Data Processing).

dormakaba interface 90 10

Product Details. Up to two Wiegand readers can be connected to the dormakaba interface 90 10. Additional functions, such as severa...

dormakaba USA

Key Card Interface - support.resortdata.com.

Kaba Interface. This interface allows the front desk staff to issue request to encode key cards for guests at check-in time, upon ...

Resort Data Processing

Section 2: KABA Interface - CHASS IT

The KABA interface makes it easy to punch in and out throughout your workday. From the main menu, you can view your recorded time,

NC State University

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dormakaba interface 90 10

dormakaba USA

<https://www.dormakaba.com> › card-readers-peripherals

The dormakaba interface 90 10 functions as an access subterminal and can be connected to the access control unit.

Key Card Interface - support.resortdata.com.

Resort Data Processing

<https://support.resortdata.com> › System › KabaInterface

Kaba Interface. This interface allows the front desk staff to issue request to encode key cards for guests at check-in time, upon changes to the reservation (...

Kaba Benzing Interface

synerion.co.il

<https://synerion.co.il> › uploads › 2022/03 › Kaba_...

PDF

Purpose: Kaba Benzing's terminals\clocks can create time and attendance records in flexible formats but not in the. Lavie format. LVTrans.exe ...

KABA Access Code Interface - Guest Technologies

guestec.com

<http://www.guestec.com> › kaba

The KABA Access Code interface automatically tracks new and modified reservations, and quickly retrieves and records the needed Codes. KABA is a leader in the ...

KABA Community Mobile Interface BLE

lockfobs.com

<https://www.lockfobs.com> › product-p › kb-7081602-pble

KABA Community Mobile Interface BLE. Our Price: \$5,100.00 Members Price: \$3,500.00. Our Price: \$175.00. Our Price: \$1,888.50. Our Price: \$600.00 Members Price: ...

\$5,100.00 · In stock

kaba integration? - General Help and Questions - Forums

OwnerRez

<https://www.ownerrez.com> › forums › kaba-integration

Looks like the Kaba interface is only in PM mode with 10+ units? Any chance those of us with only 1 or 2 units will be able to get in on the act?

Kaba Interface - support.resortdata.com. - Resort Data Processing

Resort Data Processing

<https://support.resortdata.com> › SysAdmin › System › K...

Click here for tutorials. Kaba Interface. This interface allows the front desk staff to issue request to encode key cards for guests at check-in time, ...

Kaba Alarm Interface

Virtual Police

<http://virtualpolice.com> › kaba-alarm-interface

The Kaba Alarm Interface Unit solves one of the toughest problems with securing a building — false alarms. By fully integrating biometric access control with ...

KABA Tutorial - CHASS IT - NC State

NC State University

<https://it.chass.ncsu.edu> › kaba-project › section1

KABA is a time-reporting system for which employees can record their hours worked without the need for paper timesheets. The system documents all time recorded,

Kaba Mas Auditcon Alarm Interface Kit

Securitybase.com

<https://securitybase.com> › kaba-mas-auditcon-alarm-inter...

2 x 1-1/4 x 1/2 in., black polycarbonate. Designed to send a silent signal to an external alarm system. \$135.13 ...

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4

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8

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What The Gnostic Pentagram Ritual Sounds Like

The Blog of Baphomet

<https://theblogofbaphomet.com> › 2014/02/13 › what-th...

Feb 13, 2014 — A demonstration of the vowel sounds (I, E, A, O, U) that Pete Carroll uses to build the various banishing rituals in his writing.

The Gnostic Pentagram Ritual

Spells Of Magic

<https://www.spellsofmagic.com> › ... › Articles

May 4, 2018 — The Gnostic Pentagram Ritual comes from Peter Carroll as presented as a banishing and healing technique in his book Liber Kaos.

Gnostic Pentagram Ritual

Chaos Matrix

<http://www.chaosmatrix.org> › library › chaos › rites › gpr

The Gnostic Pentagram Ritual begins with a visualization of radiance in five areas of the body. Each visualization is assisted by a vibration of one of the ...

Chaos Magick: The Gnostic Pentagram Ritual

Medium · Wolf Of Antimony

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The gnostic pentagram ritual is a much more simplified version of the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram focusing a lot more on the ...

Rituals similar to the gnostic pentagram ritual?

Reddit · r/chaosmagick

6 comments · 3 years ago

I particularly like this ritual from Peter J. Carrol, it is simple, effective and unlike the LBRP is not drenched in a history I personally don't understand.

6 answers

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Top answer:

There is a long list that is influenced by dogma. Gnostic pentagram is an excellent dogma ...

How I Designed a Banishing Ritual Without Doing a ...

32 answers

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Gnostic Pentagram Ritual : r/occult - Reddit

6 answers

May 20, 2016

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Gnostic Banishing Ritual of The Four Luminaries - This Way

Scribd

<https://www.scribd.com> › [document](#) › [gnostic-banishin...](#)

1. Centering Ritual Stand facing East, and with your right hand, make a Tau cross on your forehead. Whisper the word “SIGE” (pron: SEE-gay).

People also ask

What is the banishing ritual?

What is the basic banishing ritual?

What is the purpose of the Lbrp ritual?

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The Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram ... - Facebook

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The Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram is the ceremonial magician's way of casting a circle of protection. Some Wiccan groups will cast a ...

Gnostic Banishing Ritual, from www.facebook.com

Bornless Ritual

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org> › [wiki](#) › [Bornless_Ritual](#)

Its invocation of the "Bornless One" was believed to summon a transcendent power capable of banishing negative influences and purifying the practitioner and ...

Gnostic Pentagram Ritual | PDF

Scribd

[https://www.scribd.com › document › Gnostic-Pentagra...](https://www.scribd.com/document/Gnostic-Pentagram)

It involves visualizing energy moving through different parts of the body while vocalizing vowel sounds, then drawing pentagrams in the air or visualizing them.

Banishing Rituals | Temple of Anubis

templeofanubis.org

<https://templeofanubis.org> › Writings

Jun 3, 2019 — The banishing ritual is your armour, the defence against any unwanted thoughts or energies from interfering in the great work of your will.

1

2

3

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[OAHSPÉ: A New Bible in the Words of Jehovih and His Angel ...](#)

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[Originally published](#)

[1882](#)

[Author](#)

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[Dec 23, 2020](#)

[Oahspe: A New Bible](#)

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Oahspe: A New Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oahspe:_A_New_Bible)

Oahspe comprises a series of related interior books chronicling earth and its heavenly administrations, as well as setting forth teachings for modern times.

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OAHSPE: A New Bible in the Words of Jehovih and His ...

Amazon.com

[https://www.amazon.com › OAHSPE-EMBASSADORS...](https://www.amazon.com/OAHSPE-EMBASSADORS...)

Oahspe is more than a book. It is a way of life and it teaches man to recognize his oneness with the infinite spirit of the universe.

What is Faithism and the Oahspe Bible?

GotQuestions.org

[https://www.gotquestions.org › ... › The Occult](https://www.gotquestions.org/.../The_Occult)

Jan 4, 2022 — Oahspe: A New Bible inspired a small spiritualist religion known as Faithism. Followers of its teachings are known as Faithists. Faithism ...

Oahspe Index

Sacred Texts Archive

[https://sacred-texts.com › Oahspe](https://sacred-texts.com/Oahspe)

Oahspe is a book written in 1880 by an American dentist named John Ballou

Newbrough. Oahspe is about four-fifths the size of the King James Bible, and more ...

Oahspe : a new Bible in the words of Jehovih and his angel ...

Internet Archive

[https://archive.org › details › thewordsofjehovih](https://archive.org/details/thewordsofjehovih)

Nov 5, 2019 — A new Bible in the words of Jehovih and his angel ambassadors. A sacred history of the dominions of the higher and lower heavens on the earth for the past ...

Oahspe by John Ballou Newbrough, ebook

Global Grey Ebooks

<https://www.globalgreybooks.com> › oahspe-ebook

Oahspe is a book by John Ballou Newbrough, first published in 1882. Written in a unique, inspired style, the work claims to have been produced through ...

\$3.50

Oahspe a New Bible in the Words of Jehovah and His ...

Goodreads

<https://www.goodreads.com> › book › show › 518378.O...

The 900 page plus book -- with mystical hieroglyphics and other illustrations -- was the Oahspe. It expanded on Christian thought and included wisdoms from non ...

\$4.00 · 4.5(56)

OAHSPE 1882 Edition.wps

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Oahspe: A New Bible is a book published in 1882, purporting to contain "new revelations" from "...the Embassadors of the angel hosts of heaven prepared and revealed unto man in the name of Jehovih..." [Wikipedia](#)

Originally published: 1882

Author: John Newbrough

Original language: English

Original title: Oahspe: A New Bible

Pages: 890

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First edition title page

Original title Oahspe: A New Bible

Language English

Subject Spiritual-Religious

Publisher Newbrough

Publication date 1882

Publication place United States

Pages 890

Oahspe: A New Bible is a book published in 1882, purporting to contain "new revelations" from "...the Embassadors of the angel hosts of heaven prepared and revealed unto man in the name of Jehovih..."[1] It was produced by an American dentist, John Ballou Newbrough (1828–1891),[2] who reported it to have been written by automatic writing, making it one of a number of 19th-century spiritualist works attributed to that practice.[3] The text defines adherents of the disciplines expounded in Oahspe as "Faithists".[4]

Oahspe comprises a series of related interior books chronicling earth and its heavenly

administrations, as well as setting forth teachings for modern times. Included are over 100 drawings.[5] The title page of Oahspe describes its contents with these words:

A New Bible in the Words of Jehovih and His Angel Embassadors. A Sacred History of the Dominions of the Higher and Lower Heavens on the Earth for the Past Twenty-Four Thousand Years together with a Synopsis of the Cosmogony of the Universe; the Creation of Planets; the Creation of Man; the Unseen Worlds; the Labor and Glory of Gods and Goddesses in the Ethereal Heavens; with the New Commandments of Jehovih to Man of the Present Day.

"The Great Spirit", "Ormazd", "Egoquim", "Agoquim", "Eloih", "The I Am", and "Jehovih" are some of the names used throughout Oahspe as the name of the Creator.

According to Oahspe, the Creator is both masculine and feminine. Om is one of the names used to refer to the feminine (mother) aspect. Other references include, "The All Person", "The unseen" and "The Everpresent", "The All Light", "The Highest Light". God and Lord are titles of office for a person in the spirit realm who began life as mortal/in corporeal form (spirit within a body). The Creator is all and was all and forever will be all; S/he was never born and is beyond all gods. The Creator is our father and mother, and all that are and were born are our brothers and sisters.[6]

Genesis and first presentation

The "Tablet of Fonece," an illustration from Oahspe
Oahspe (the word is defined as "sky, earth (corpor) and spirit. The all; the sum of corporeal and spiritual knowledge as at present"[7]) was published in 1882.

Newbrough started writing the book in 1880 and stated that the writing was done automatically; he had been a spiritualist since the early 1870s. On at least two occasions Newbrough wrote publicly about how the Oahspe came about through automatic writing: in a letter published in the Banner of Light (a 19th-century Spiritualist newspaper), and an Addendum in the 1882 Edition republished by Raymond A. Palmer in 1972. Both accounts, written in the first person, indicate that Newbrough sat at a (newly invented) typewriter for half an hour each morning at which time his hands would automatically type (without his knowledge of what was being written).[8] An article in The New York Times had him explain that, feeling the urge to write, he sat down with pen and paper until a bright light enveloped his fingers and they started writing. Moreover, many of the drawings contain symbols resembling hieroglyphs, presumably drawn.[9] A copy of the "Banner of Light" letter accompanied Oahspses published by the Kosmon Press in England (such as it was received in New Zealand in 1895).[10]

The first presentation of the book took place on 20 October 1882 in Newbrough's house, at 128 West 34th Street in New York City, where he presented the "new bible," "a large quarto volume of over 900 pages," to a group of people. According to the New York Times news article, Newbrough said that the book was not a sacred text per se, but

rather a history of religions going back 24,000 years, and that the first publication of the book came about with the financial assistance of a number of unnamed contributors.[9]

Style and language

The first (1882 edition) publication, as it was originally presented in 1882, contained various glyphs, whose resemblance to real Egyptian hieroglyphs was attested to by Prof. Thomas A. M. Ward, who claimed to have deciphered the hieroglyphics on the Cleopatra's Needle obelisk in Central Park. Ward was present at Oahspe's first presentation, as was Dr. Cetliniski, an Oriental scholar, who affirmed that mere mortals could not have produced such a book and that "supernatural agents" must have been responsible.[9]

The first reporter on the book, writing for The New York Times, compared the book's content to a revised fusion of Indian and Semitic religions, and said its style was "in one place modern, and in another ancient, and the English of the King James version of the Christian Bible is mixed in with the English of today's." [9]

Basic teachings

Oahspe emphasized service to others; each person is graded according to service to others.[6] Each individual, group and nation is either in ascension or descension; sooner or later, all ascend, rising in grade. The higher one's grade, the better are the conditions within one's own soul, and the better the place awaiting one in heaven.

According to Oahspe, when mortals die their spirits continue to live, regardless of who they worshiped, or even whether they disbelieved in an afterlife.[11] The spirit realm becomes their new home, which is called heaven, and the individual spirit is called an angel. There are unorganized heavens close to or on the earth. Also starting there – and linking to the highest heavens – are the organized heavens. Both types of heavens are accessible to mortals. If a portion of heaven lives in a state of chaos and delights in evil, that portion is called hell.

An angel must subsist for a season after death somewhere along a continuum of delightful to abysmally wretched conditions. The heavenly place where angels initially live is determined by what their habits were as mortals; as well as by their aspirations and diet.[12] Selfish behavior, low thoughts, or eating animal derived food will place a newborn angel in the lowest level, being on the earth. Evil oriented persons enter heaven into hellish conditions. Nevertheless, all in descension eventually turn around and ascend upward to more delightful places within an organized heaven, whose chief is called God. God is an advanced angel ordained into office for a season.

The morphologically plural name Elohim, often translated as god-singular in the Old Testament, is not used to mean the Creator throughout the main body of Oahspe; the singular Hebrew terms "Jehovih" (SHD 3069) and "Eloih" are used instead.[citation needed]

Arrangement

According to Oahspe, the history of humankind is marked by a series of progressions. These lessons come in cycles: advancement followed by recession, being in turn succeeded by other cycles of improvement and regression. Cycles exist within cycles, but one important cycle, used in improving the grade of humanity, is a 3000-year cycle (average), and it is this cycle around which the books in Oahspe are organized.

The first few books of Oahspe lay the groundwork for understanding the nature of the work. This merges into a concise history taking the reader up to the present time, the new era. Separate from the history books are a series of books intended to illumine for the reader the requirements of humanity for this day and age.

An interesting graphological characteristic of Oahspe is that a number of its sub-books are printed on pages divided in two. In these, the top half of the page contains a narrative of celestial events, while the bottom half describes the corresponding events on Earth.

Synopsis

Doctrines

Oahspe includes doctrinal books, and precepts for behavior can be found throughout its many books. Freedom and responsibility are two themes reiterated throughout the text of Oahspe. Some core doctrines include an herbivorous diet (vegan, vegetable food only), peaceful living (no warring or violence; pacifism), living a life of virtue, service to others, angelic assistance, spiritual communion, and communal living, (the smallest collective unit being ten families, the largest being a total of 3,000 persons then dividing to create a new community).

Subjects

Ethics

Oahspe exhibits great interest in understanding and applying general ethical principles. The suffix ISM in Faith-ism is defined meaning adherence or following an ideology. The Book of Inspiration in the Oahspe states "I will have no sect. I will have no creed".

Religion

Oahspe speaks of the need for all religions to help the various nations and peoples to rise upward. It also speaks of what it calls "the religion of Gods themselves,"[13] in which its adherents have no need for intermediaries such as Saviors and Idols, but who commune directly with, the Creator, the All Person, the collective unconscious of the Universe.

History

Oahspe purports to describe events in the spirit realms and their corresponding influence on events in the physical world starting from approximately 72,000 years ago, although many of such events are not recorded in the existing human records. The Book of Eskra and the Book of Es, according to Oahspe, are the more recent historical

records (as they were recorded in the spirit realms) from 1550 BCE to the time Oahspe was transcribed in 1880 CE. The Book of God's Word teaches the record of Zarathustra and dates his time on earth at 9000 years ago.

Geology and archeology

Oahspe gives details, including maps, about lost lands and new lands, particularly a large sunken continent called Pan or Whaga that once filled much of the Pacific Ocean. It also puts forward explanations on the causes of rapid loss or gain of fertility, the cyclical variations in heat and light upon the earth.

Language and linguistics

Oahspe presents many illustrations of symbols said to be of ancient languages and of rites and ceremonies. It states the concept that there was an original language called Pan or the Panic Language, meaning "Earth Language," which originated from the ability of humans to mimic sounds. Its Book of Saphah has details on the claimed meanings and roots of many of the ancient words, symbols and ceremonies.

Evolution or progress

Oahspe contains chronologically-ordered accounts that are cosmological revelations concerning the development of humanity from approximately 78,000 years ago. This also includes a narrative of the genesis of life on earth, from its start as a planet being formed from its beginnings as a comet gathering material as its vortex (subtle envelope) matures till it is placed into its own stable orbit around its sun. After cooling - the transformation of gases and its first life-forms - and finally to the appearance of the human race and its progression from beast to physical and spiritual maturity. The process, according to Oahspe, has reached its last stage with the emergence of the "herbivorous men and women of peace" of this Kosmon era.

System and order

Cosmogony

Oahspe explains physical science as having its basis in subtler realms (which include spiritual forces), and then how to predict from them. Oahspe devotes an entire interior book to the subject, called the Book of Cosmogony and Prophecy, but a general overview can be read in the Book of Jehovih. Also, many examples and edifications are sprinkled throughout Oahspe. Other related subjects include physics and an integrating treatment of gravity, light, electricity, magnetism, heat, weather phenomenon, subtle planetary envelopes (called vortices) that respond to conditions beyond its boundaries and more.

Vortex motion of planets was originally proposed by philosopher and mathematician René Descartes in the early 17th century, and was not a new scientific theory as Oahspe claims. Unfortunately for Descartes and Oahspe, vortex motion of planets was superseded by the scientific work of Isaac Newton.

Cycles

The text describes cyclical events that occur within a range of greater and smaller cycles. For instance, according to Oahspe, the earth is traveling with the sun and its planets through regions of space in a large circuit of 4,700,000 years, which is divided into sections of 3,000 years average, which also occur within larger cycles of 24,000 years and 72,000 years, and so on. Each of these regions has variations in density and other qualities, and so, engender varying conditions that the Earth encounters. Also, explanation is given as to the rise and fall of civilizations.

Administration

The various regions mentioned in the previous Cycles section are under the administration of spiritual or "ethereal" beings with titles such as "God" and "Chief" and whose ranks and ages vary in ascending grade, from tens of thousands of years to hundreds of thousands of years old and older. Their dominions cover vast distances and include many spiritual and corporeal worlds of various grades and densities.

These chief officers are designated "Sons and Daughters of Jehovih," and in accordance, the text of Oahspe contains separate sections or "books" such as the Book of Cpenta-Armij, Daughter of Jehovih, and also includes familiar names from non-Abrahamic religions, as in the Book of Apollo and Book of Thor, named as Sons of Jehovih.

Each of these Chiefs, Chieftainesses, Gods and Goddesses are only advanced angels according to Oahspe. And every angel, regardless of rank or office, was once a mortal, either from this planet earth or from some other planet in the universe.

Faithism

"Faithism" redirects here. For the epistemological theory on faith, see Fideism. Soon after its publication, a number of groups/lodges formed in response to Oahspe. In New York City, the Oahspe Faithists met as early as 1883 in the Utah Hall (25th Street and 8th Avenue) with members only attending services.[14] A first colony based on the book's principles was founded in 1882 by Newbrough in Woodside Township, New Jersey,[15] but was relocated five months later to a property in Pearl River New York State.[16]

It was from the Pearl River location that Newbrough and a number of Faithists and orphaned children went to Las Cruces, New Mexico, where they founded the Shalam Colony in 1884. The Shalam Colony continued to exist until 1901,[17] although Newbrough died in 1891 during a severe influenza epidemic.[18]

Faithist groups in the United States

Universal Faithists of Kosmon inc. (Utah, California, Colorado, and Ohio)[19]
Universal Light: The Voice of Jehovih The I Am Center, c1970-1986 (Anaheim, CA)
Brothers of Shalam (Albion, CA)
Brotherhood of Light, c1901 - 1908 (Arboles, CO)

The Restoration Faithists (New York and Ohio)
The Eloists (New England region)
Oahspe College University (online)
Seventh Era Faithist (online)
The New York Kosmon Temple (Brooklyn NY)[20]
Eloin Forest (The Oahspe Foundation, Oregon)[21]
Faithist groups outside of the United States
The Kosmon Sanctuary, in the United Kingdom
The Oahspe Stichting, in the Netherlands
Jehovih's Faithists (English Español and Português)
Universal Brotherhood, in Balingup, NW Australia
Land of Shalam

The Shalam Colony, or Land of Shalam, was founded in 1884 as a communal farm in which members would live peaceful, vegetarian lifestyles, and where orphaned urban children were to be raised. The property was about 10 miles north-north-west of Las Cruces, New Mexico, and 1.2 miles west of Doña Ana. The commune was decided upon after a convention at Pearl River, New York, in November 1883, and was founded with the financial help of Andrew Howland. Newbrough raised money as well. He charged James Ellis \$10,000 to join Shalam, and the next day Ellis demanded his money back. Newbrough refused to return the money. Members spent the first winter in adobe huts, and in 1885 began building a 42-room central building, the Fraternum. Children were "'gathered-up' from foundling homes; handed over by police sergeants; and left in Faithist depositories". Newbrough and his wife traveled as far as Kansas City, San Francisco, New Orleans, and Chicago to gather children. The children, from a variety of races, were pampered and treated with love and kindness.[22]

By the time Newbrough died (on 22 April 1891, of influenza), the colony consisted of the Fraternum, the Children's House (completed in 1890), and a church and other buildings. After the majority of the original volunteers left Shalam in 1886 when the financier, Howland resumed ownership of the property, a second type of colony was built a half a mile away from Shalam; called Levitica, it was founded for people who were not particularly followers of Oahspe teachings but needed a place to live. Levitica was designed in a less communal fashion, and inhabitants lived in more isolated homes.[22] This arrangement also soon failed due to various factors including non-participation.

Apparently, the colony was not a viable financial enterprise, due to the repeated failure of crops, the lack of markets for the crops they did produce, and the frequent flooding of the Rio Grande; Newbrough's wife, Francis van de Water Sweet, had married Howland in 1893 "to put an end to malicious gossip" but the cost of maintaining the colony proved too high. In 1901, the colony folded, and the children were sent to orphanages in Dallas and Denver.[15]

Related publications

Numerous publications[23] have been inspired by Oahspe, incorporating text and ideas from it, as well as reinterpretations, condensed and abridged versions. Many of these

publications were from: The Essenes of Kosmon,[24] Montrose, Colorado; Kosmon Press, London; Palmer Publications, Amherst, Wisconsin; Universal Faithists of Kosmon, Salt Lake City, Utah; Kosmon Publishing Inc., Kingman, Arizona; The Eloists, Massachusetts; Four Winds Village, Tiger, Georgia. 2009 Edition of Oahspe Seven Books of Spiritual Wisdom https://openlibrary.org/books/OL24615840M/Oahspe_Seven_Books_of_Spiritual_Wisdom 1998 Edition of Oahspe <https://openlibrary.org/books/OL400274M/Oahspe>

Biography of John Newbrough

John Ballou Newbrough was born on 5 June 1828 near Mohicanville, Ohio, in a log cabin. His father, William Newbrough, was an Englishman who had attended the College of William & Mary; his mother, Elizabeth Polsky, was Swiss and attracted to spiritualism. Their son was named for the universalist clergyman Hosea Ballou. Newbrough's father was a stern man, flogging his son when the latter "began to receive spirit messages"; his schooling (he went to high school in Cleveland) was paid for by his mother and him selling wool and eggs. He graduated from Cincinnati Medical College, but being highly sensitive to pain and suffering he chose dentistry, setting up practice first in Dayton, then Cincinnati, and then New York City. He ran into trouble with the Goodyear Rubber Company after he developed a much cheaper compound to set teeth in dental plates than the one produced by Goodyear, which dominated the market. He was sued for patent infringement, but when the verdict was handed down in his favor, after he had supposedly consulted with spirits who visited him at dawn, he saw that as confirmation of his spiritual future.[25]

Critical reception

The Surrealist poet David Gascoyne at first found the claims of the book ridiculous, but eventually reread it and evaluated it as "the most astonishing book in the English language".[26]

Martin Gardner, a critic of The Urantia Book, considered Oahspe to be a similar type of production. Gardner opined that Oahspe is even "crazier than the works of Swedenborg and Davis"[27] and that rather than a religious work, the book "could just as well be classified as moonshine".[28] Edgar Johnson Goodspeed included it in Famous Biblical Hoaxes (1956), and Gordon Stein in the book Encyclopedia of Hoaxes (1993) noted that Oahspe has not been taken seriously because it was revealed to contain "many factual errors and unfulfilled prophecies".[29]

Modern culture

In modern times it has been stated "Newbrough was possibly the first to use the word 'starship'".[30]

See also

New religious movement

The Urantia Book

The Seekers (rapturists)